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ISSUE 129 WELCOME



Welcome to the latest issue of **Advanced Photoshop**. With this issue, you'll get a copy of DxO Optics Pro 8 (sold for £239) completely free! That's definitely something worth shouting about.

APRIL MADDEN
Editor

IN THIS ISSUE:

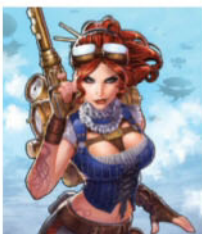
- DIGITAL PAINTING
- VECTORS
- PHOTOMANIPULATION
- ILLUSTRATION
- GRAPHIC DESIGN

COVER IMAGE

DAVID NAKAYAMA

www.davidnakayama.com

Concept artist and Marvel freelancer David Nakayama takes to the skies this issue with this sultry steampunk skycaptain. Find out how you can create your own steampunk character in his tutorial on p42.



In fact, this issue is all about attention-grabbing artwork. From the stunning 3D and Photoshop composites of Mike Campau (p10) to the sleek lines of vectors (p26), it's packed with advice on how to create high-impact imagery. You'll learn how to produce a stunning steampunk character design in David Nakayama's tutorial on p42 and capture the unique, light-filled properties of stained glass with Morghan Gill on p52. Discover how illustrative elements can transform a map from a simple graphic to a thing of beauty with Abi Daker on p62, and learn all the professional secrets that poster artists use to develop eye-catching designs in our feature on p68.

Meanwhile, head over to p96 to discover the goodies that we've packed into FileSilo this issue. Our online resource repository is bursting with fonts, stock images, textures and much more for you to download for free. Enjoy!



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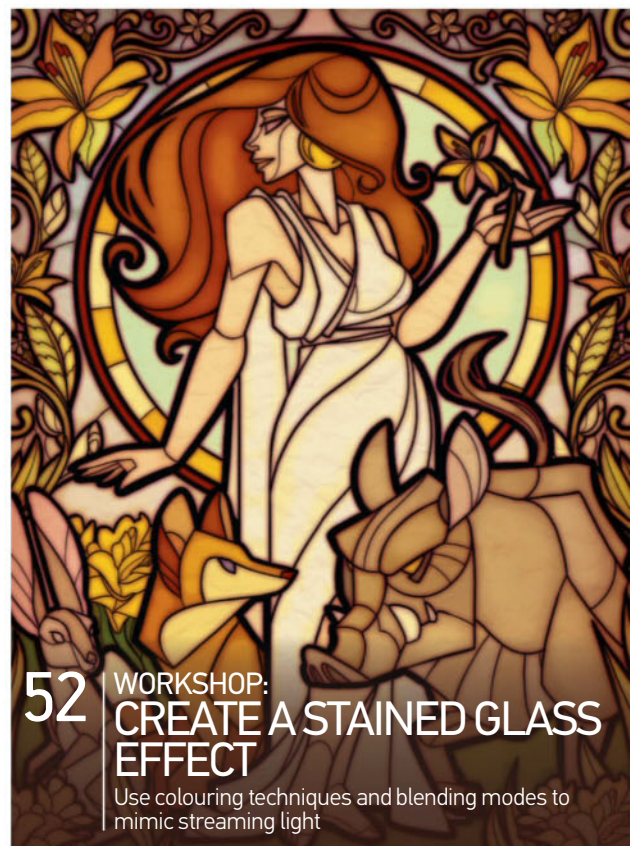
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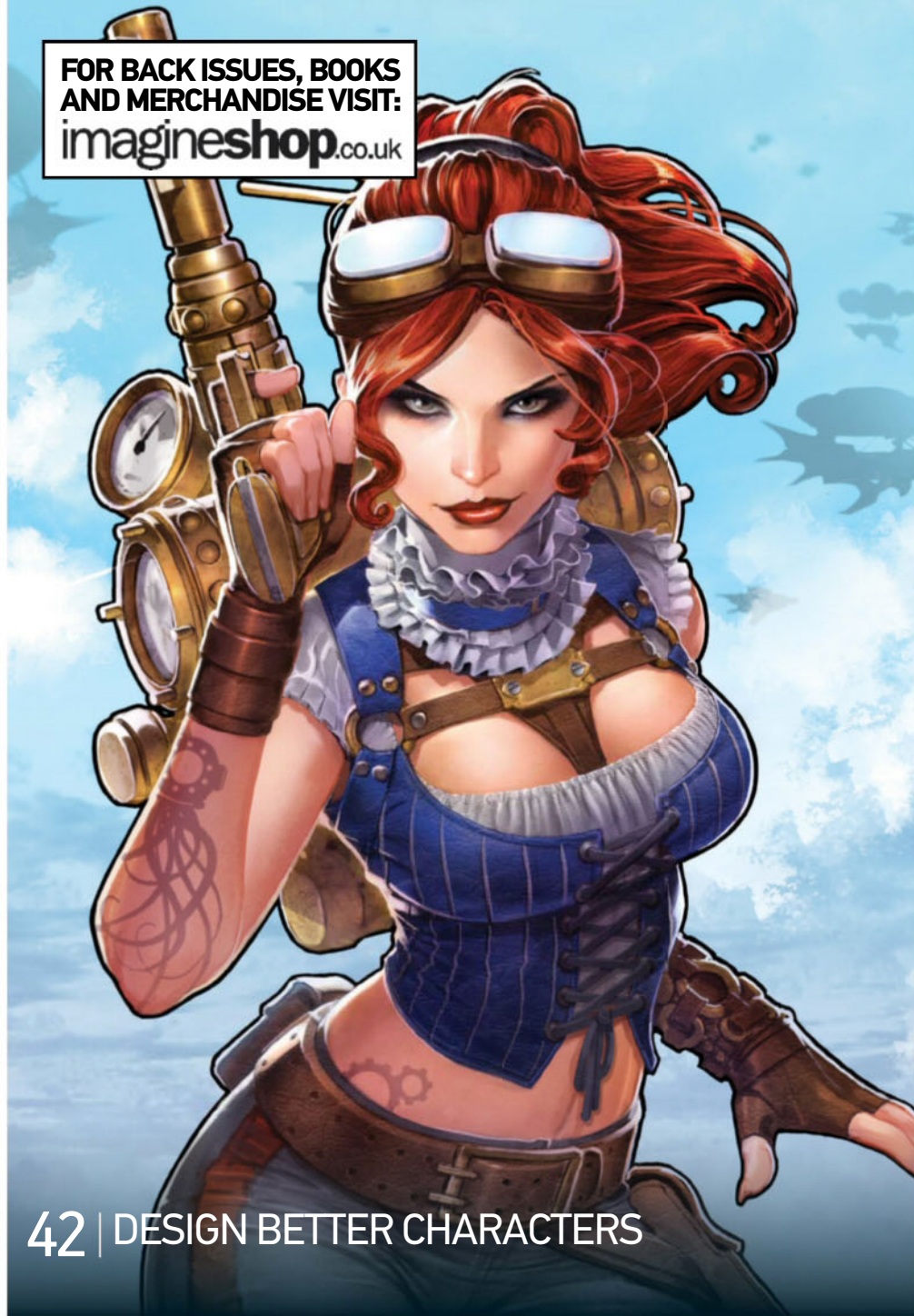
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- Video tutorials
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ADVANCED PHOTOSHOP® PRO PANEL

MEET THE PROFESSIONALS SHARING THEIR PHOTOSHOP
EXPERTISE AND TECHNIQUES IN THIS ISSUE



DAVID NAKAYAMA

www.davidnakayama.com

David Nakayama is a San Francisco-based illustrator and concept artist, currently serving as lead artist at TinyCo on an unannounced project. He enjoys working in both digitally painted and comic-book styles, and in his spare time he freelances for clients including Marvel Comics as well as Corvus Belli among others.

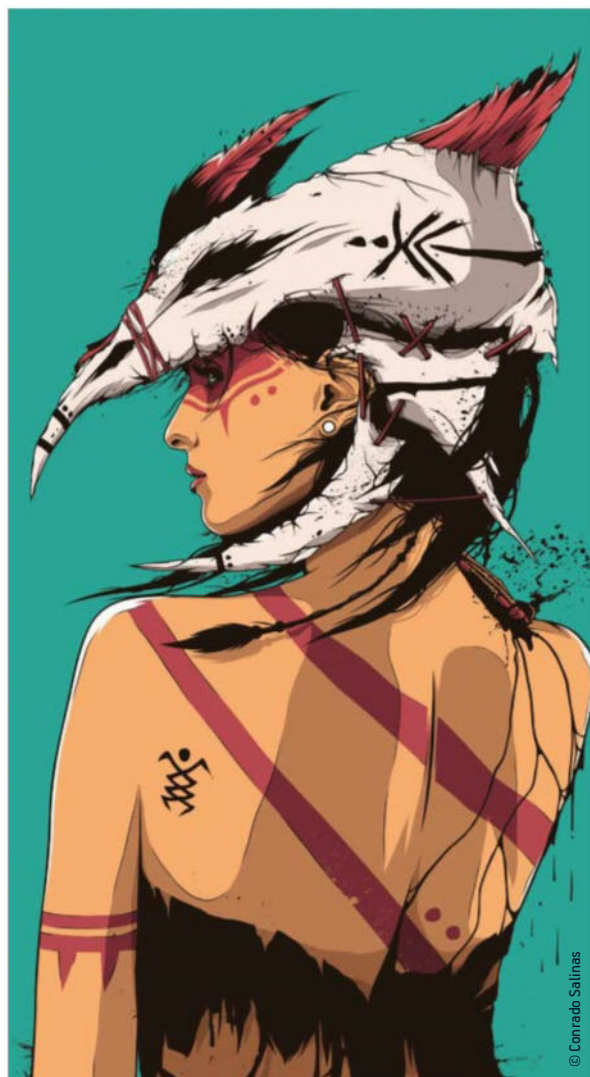
■ Explore how David Nakayama created our awe-inspiring cover in his character design tutorial over on p42



© David Nakayama

“Photoshop is a daily part of my life both in the studio and at home”

MORGHAN GILL / WWW.MOGIARTS.COM



© Conrado Salinas



CONRADO SALINAS

www.conradosalinas.com

Conrado Salinas is a Los Angeles-based illustrator with an eight-year background in graphic design. He first started creating vector portraits in 2011 using Photoshop as his primary program. He has since been featured in art-inspiration blogs, magazines, and recently had an illustration featured at Adobe MAX 2014.

■ Discover more about how Conrado Salinas uses vectors in Photoshop in his tutorial on p36



MORGHAN GILL
www.mogiarts.com

A 2D artist and character designer, Morghan is an alumni of the Laguna College of Art and Design and has been working in the videogames and animation industry for over three years. Photoshop is a daily part of her life both in the studio and at home.

■ **Discover how Morghan Gill uses Photoshop by following along with her tutorial on stained glass effects on p52**



© Morghan Gill



ABI DAKER
www.abigaildaker.com

Abi Daker is an artist and illustrator from the UK who lives in Paphos, Cyprus. Much of her work consists of cityscape, map and panoramic drawings, which are drawn by hand on multiple sheets of paper and then stitched together using Photoshop.

■ **Find out more about how you can use Photoshop to create beautiful cartographic illustrations on p62**



© Abi Daker

ADVANCED PHOTOSHOP

The magazine for Adobe® Photoshop® professionals

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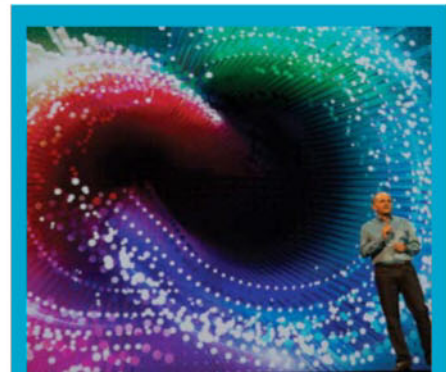
WILL CC LIBRARIES CHANGE THE WAY YOU WORK?

ADOBE MAX MARKS A NEW ERA FOR THE CREATIVE CLOUD BY ENABLING USERS ACCESS ACROSS DESKTOP AND MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Asset management has had a major new upgrade. At this year's annual Adobe MAX conference, the company announced that it is officially pursuing a new combined strategy for use across desktop and mobile for CC. The exciting CC updates will now streamline asset management for both studios and users, making the process much easier and quicker. The apps will sync with Adobe's full desktop software more effectively than ever before, enabling more efficient work on the iPad and iPhone even while on the move.

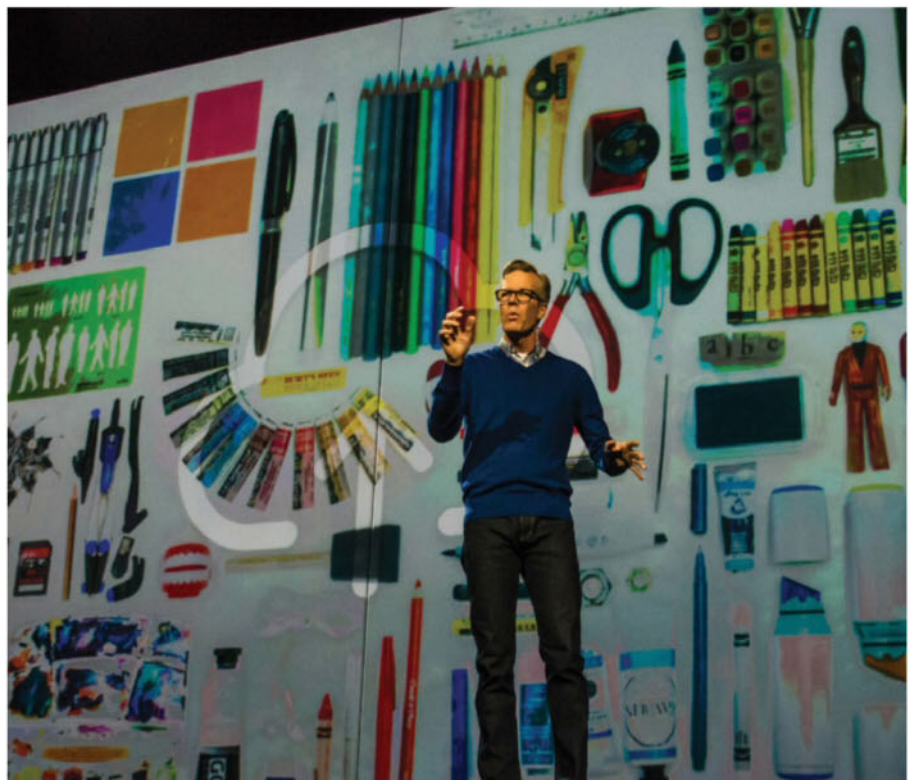
This news comes alongside a continually expanding range of impressive new and updated apps from Adobe. A brand-new family of mobile apps has been developed specifically for capturing on the go. Made up of Adobe Color CC, Adobe Brush CC and Adobe Shape CC, these enable users to do anything from creating colour themes with their iPhone photos to transforming images into a unique brush on an iPhone or iPad. Users can even turn shapes from high-contrast photos on their iPhones into editable vectors for Illustrator CC or Illustrator Draw.

The release also showcases new features for Photoshop's own mobile family of apps, including full compatibility of Photoshop and Lightroom for Adobe Photoshop Mix, Adobe Photoshop Sketch, as well as Lightroom mobile.



■ THE NEW PHOTOSHOP CC

At the conference, Adobe also announced the release of Photoshop CC 2014.2, an update with a host of fresh features. Improvements include a new welcome screen that presents tutorial videos to the user, as well as having the ability to read COLLADA rigging and animation data. Also for the first time, users can export 3D PDFs, enabling them to import 3D animated characters and edit them in the software.



“The pace of innovation continues to accelerate with Creative Cloud, and today we are introducing a new family of mobile apps that are deeply integrated with flagship CC desktop tools”

Meanwhile, a new Creative Cloud Market is being introduced to feature a collection of high-quality, curated content that is freely accessible for every CC member. Creative Cloud Libraries, the new asset management service, connects to Creative Profiles to enable users to easily save favourite colours, brushes, text styles, graphics, vector images and other content from the Creative Cloud Market, directly into their personal libraries. Downloaded graphics from the Market will then be available directly inside a

desktop application, such as Photoshop, for later use and application.

“The pace of innovation continues to accelerate with Creative Cloud, and today we are introducing a new family of mobile apps that are deeply integrated with flagship CC desktop tools, like Photoshop and Illustrator, and taking mobile devices into the creative mainstream,” said David Wadhvani, senior vice president, Digital Media at Adobe. “Creative Cloud is evolving into an increasingly powerful resource for our millions of members.”



PHOTOSHOP COMES TO CHROMEBOOKS

ARTISTS WILL SOON BE ABLE TO USE A FULL VERSION OF PHOTOSHOP DIRECTLY ON THEIR GOOGLE CHROMEBOOK THROUGH THE CREATIVE CLOUD

Google and Adobe have announced the results of a brand-new partnership with an exciting new innovation: the ability to use the full version of Photoshop – aside from a few GPU-dependant features and printing – directly on their Chrome OS through the Creative Cloud. For users of the Chromebook, which isn't normally able to run full

desktop programs, it could revolutionise their creative capacity. The sophisticated yet accessible image-editing and creation program will be available on hardware that can be used by professional artists and students alike. There will be no need to upload or download files, because users can simply save art directly from Photoshop to the Cloud. IT administrators will also find it easy to manage with no long client installation, as well as one-click deployment to their team's notebooks.

To add to the news, Adobe has said that this streaming option will also be available on any other Windows device that has the chrome browser installed. There is a while to wait yet, however, as streaming is currently only available as a beta release to US-based Adobe Education customers with a paid Creative Cloud membership. The project will be reportedly unavailable to others for at least the next six months. On the flip side, the future opportunity of using Photoshop on the go and wherever there is an internet connection looks incredibly bright.

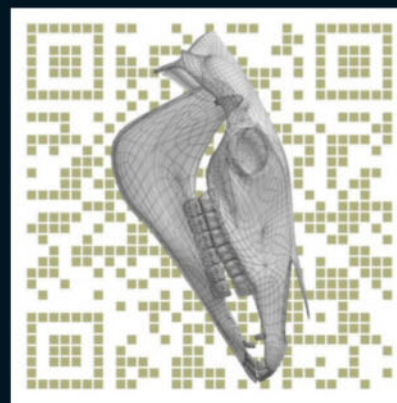


‘DE/CODING THE APOCALYPSE’: AN EXHIBITION

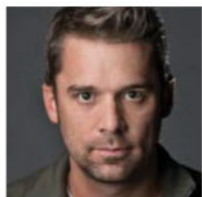
THE CULTURAL INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES A NEW LONDON EXHIBITION OF DIGITAL ART BY MICHAEL TAKEO MAGRUDER

Taking place at the King's College London's Inigo Rooms until December 19, 'De/coding The Apocalypse' has all the makings of an exhibition not to be missed this winter. The event was initially developed after visual artist Michael Takeo Magruder's one-year artist residency at the Department of Theology & Religious Studies at King's College, and combines an interdisciplinary blend of both art and academic research to match his extensive work. Magruder has even incorporated the latest technological advances with everything from 3D printing to virtual reality for viewers to witness.

Inspired by and based on the 'Book Of Revelation', which documents the destruction of the current world along with the creation of a better new one, 'De/coding The Apocalypse' is made up of five digital media installations, each housed in a separate room. One piece, *The Horse As Technology*, presents the horses of the Apocalypse set inside a laboratory filled with computer workstations, digital displays, 3D scanning and printing systems, as well as a real horse skull and other biological materials displayed at the room's focal point. Other installations include *A New Jerusalem*, where audiences are invited to step into a virtual-reality, illuminated metropolis built using real-time data collected from urban sensors. Also featuring is *Playing The Apocalypse*, a series of compositions created exclusively with in-game footage from *Gears Of War*. Learn more about Magruder's work, news and biography from his official website at www.takeo.org.



The Cultural Institute at King's College London aims to drive arts and culture that inspire new approaches to research and learning throughout the College



Mike Campau
www.mikecampau.com
@mikecampau

THE EVOLUTION OF CGI

WELL-KNOWN ARTIST MIKE CAMPAU TALKS ABOUT HIS WORK IN CGI AND PHOTOGRAPHY, AND HOW HE USES A UNIQUE BLEND OF MODO AND PHOTOSHOP TO CREATE HIS HYPER-REAL STYLE

As a self-confessed technical hack, professional artist Mike Campau has been working in the creative industry for eight years. After starting his own company in 2011, he hasn't looked back. "The best thing by far is the sense of control. I can determine the amount of time I need to work, I make all the business and marketing decisions, and most importantly, I have the freedom to experiment and collaborate with other artists all over the world."

TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR HISTORY AS AN ARTIST...

I graduated from the University of Michigan in 1996 with a BFA and began my professional career working at a small design/retouching studio that specialised in digital automotive retouching. I worked my way up through the studio ranks, working mostly with photographers and ad agencies, until I was ready to venture out on my own. I started Mike Campau Digital Imagery in 2011 and have had the pleasure of working with some great clients and other talented artists over the past few years.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR WORK IN CGI?

To be honest, I am a technical hack when it comes to CGI. I have been around it for years and have a pretty good understanding of all the basics, but in the end, I like to create images. So I don't get into the deep understanding of how everything works technically. I like to just get going and sometimes that means my workflow is a little messy. My creative process is pretty free-flowing, and I like that I don't need to work in a rigid formula or standard format. Quite often, working this way leads to happy accidents while experimenting and sometimes even creates the 'look' because it's different to what was supposed to happen.

HOW DO YOU USE MODO IN YOUR WORK? AND WHY MODO?

I use MODO for anything that deals with CGI, whether it's a simple object to add to a photographic scene, or a very complex CGI image. There are a few reasons for this. First, it has a super-fast render engine and it doesn't take much to get something that is good out of the box. Second, the real-time preview window has changed how I work in CGI; this is probably the

Living Sculptures (series): A conceptual series that was constructed to give human personality and activity to an otherwise nondescript structure. By combining studio photography and sculptures (built in MODO) in a whimsical style and colourful palette... this series is meant to push the visual norm.



© Mike Campau

“I am a technical hack when it comes to CGI. I have been around it for years and have a pretty good understanding of all the basics”



LifeProof Galaxy S5 Launch (series): A true collaborative process between myself, Tim Tadder and the team at LifeProof. 10 days from concept to finish, and it was only possible because of the speed and quality that MODO brings to the CGI portion of this project.

© Mike Campau, LifeProof (Otterbox), and Tim Tadder



In The Corner: Another personal collaboration between myself and Tim Tadder, this time to blend the two genres of sport and fashion. Corner sets were created completely CGI using MODO, and Photoshop played an integral part in compositing the CGI renders with Tim's photography.

© Mike Campau and Tim Tadder



Mercedes-Benz 2014/15 Sprinter Launch: Mercedes-Benz USA approached me to create environments for their 2014 Sprinter Van global launch. Since they wanted to mimic the style from my *Future Of Sports* project, the backgrounds had to be created completely in CGI. The vehicles were to be later rendered into the scenes by Eder. To help the process work seamlessly, I created 360 panoramic renders of each scene for them to use as their lighting and reflection environment.

© Client: Mercedes-Benz USA
AD: Brendan Moran
Environmental CGI: Mike Campau
Van CGI Rendering: Eder (Germany)



number one reason I moved to MODO. I used to have to render and tweak, render and tweak, and this took up too much of my time. Now, with MODO, I can see what I get and still use a CPU-style render engine. Third, I love the interface and how it works. Since I know Photoshop better than anything else in the world, the layer-based system in MODO was just a natural way for me to work. Finally, the user community and the guys who started up MODO are all great. The 'family' sense of the community and how everyone is willing to help each other out is just amazing.

WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT USING MODO FOR YOUR WORK?

Speed. It's that simple. It is very fast to learn, fast to use and fast to render. I think the fact that they keep the complex tasks simple allows the most basic user to jump in, but the customisation [options] still allow the advanced user to really refine the process.

CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR WORK WITH THE FOUNDRY?

Everyone who is a devoted MODO user feels like a family member to the team at The Foundry and the community. I have met some of the guys at The Foundry and all are great to work with. I have even gained contacts of fellow CGI artists from the team and these artists have become a critical part of my CGI team.

YOU RECENTLY CREATED A SELECTION OF IMAGES FOR THE SAMSUNG GALAXY S5 ALONG WITH OTHER ARTISTS. WHAT ROLE DID YOU PLAY?

This project was truly a team effort between David Oldfield (creative director at LifeProof), Tim Tadder (photographer) and myself. The project began with a conference call between the three of us to determine final creative direction, bounce ideas around and problem-solve [the] final execution. My role in the beginning was helping with creative direction to make sure the imagery matched up with the product's brand position. Then I began working



Celebrities: I am working with photographer Paul Mobley on his *Celebrities* book project, in which he shoots celebrities backstage before concerts, in their homes and at hotels while they are on the road. Paul and I brainstorm before each session and try to come up with ideas that best portray their personalities and artistic style. Whether it's subtle colour and tone corrections, adding CGI elements and backgrounds, or just difficult Photoshop composites, we do whatever it takes to make a captivating image.

with Tim on possible ways to shoot elements and props to get the final result that we were looking for. Knowing what I could do in CGI and what might be better to capture in camera, we fused the two skill sets together in a seamless process. Once I had the final hero shots from Tim, I created a virtual set in CGI to match the photography and started filling in the details with different elements. Some of those were our own shots, stock photos and supplementary CGI renders. Of course, in the end, Photoshop tied everything together to make a pretty killer series of images.

WHAT IS USUALLY THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF A COMMISSION?

It's definitely the conceptual side that is the most difficult to tackle. When there is a blank page in front of everyone, it's hard to envision what the other person is thinking and how they see the final piece. That is why I like to get samples of images in front of

everyone as quickly as possible to have some sort of visual reference to start a creative conversation. This is where the collaboration process and the ability to communicate is key. There are good art directors and bad art directors; the difference between them is being able to convey what they are seeing in their mind's eye. It's also up to me to pull some of this information out of them and start to capture some imagery or create quick comps so everyone can point and grunt at something.

WHAT ROLE DOES PHOTOSHOP PLAY IN YOUR IMAGE CREATION?

Photoshop is the key element in all of my work. I have used Photoshop since it wasn't even Photoshop [when it came with BarneyScan] and feel most comfortable using it than any other software. Even when I get a great render in CGI, I always bring it into Photoshop to tweak the tones, colours and add some realistic flaws like blur or noise.

► **ARE THERE ANY TOOLS THAT YOU ALWAYS USE TO CREATE YOUR WORK?**

There are quite a few processes I use in almost all my work, especially when compositing images together. The things I use most are Selective Color, calculations to combine channels and create alphas, Apply Image (a better way to get a High Pass layer), and the good old-fashioned Pen tool. Each image is unique, and sometimes it takes a series of techniques to get a really good mask to isolate and mix elements together.

NOW THAT YOU ARE AT THE TOP OF YOUR FIELD, IS THERE ANYONE WHO STILL INFLUENCES YOUR WORK?

Yes, everyone. To be honest, I don't think of myself as a very good digital artist. I am always searching out other work for inspiration, and with the amount of talent out there, I realise I need to improve every day. It's a never-ending battle. Just when I think I made something that I like, I see work that I feel is better and it keeps me driven to improve upon my last

“ I love the interface and how it works. Since I know Photoshop better than anything else in the world, the layer-based system in MODO was just a natural way for me to work ”

series. It really is true in this business; you are only as good as your last job.

WHAT DO YOU THINK SEPARATES YOUR WORK FROM THE OTHERS?

The one thing that I have become very good at is blending and compositing elements together. Even if the images look surreal or over the top, they have a sense of belonging together. I am very conscious of light and shadow, as well as how one object influences the other. By no means, do I think my work is better than anyone else's – in fact, I always think the opposite. But I do take pride in ownership that I created something from my own vision. Whether it stands out from others or not, well, that is up to everyone else to decide. Not me.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY ABOUT YOUR PROJECTS, WORK OR HOW TO GROW AS AN ARTIST?

Every artist has to find out what they love, what looks good to them, and execute that better than anyone else. What you definitely don't want to do

is copy a trend or popular style. At that point you are just following and not leading. More than likely someone has already perfected that technique and you are just playing catch-up.

DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS FOR ANY OTHER FREELANCERS OR GRAPHIC ARTISTS TRYING TO GET A FOOT IN THE DOOR?

I think that the most important thing is to realise that it is not solely about your talent. I have to admit that the biggest weakness of most artists is communication. For me, communication is one of the most important aspects of work or any relationship, because I think that everything can be solved just by talking.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU? WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?

Right now I'm finishing a series of three visuals for TMP Worldwide London and their client Arup. It is the kind of project I love the most and presents another challenge for me. Hopefully I can share it with you in the next few weeks, so stay tuned on my website or social networks.

PORTFOLIO TIPS

MIKE CAMPAU OFFERS HIS ADVICE FOR BUILDING UP YOUR BODY OF PROFESSIONAL WORK

■ **WORK IN SERIES, NOT SINGLES**

Always create images in 'series', never show a 'single' image. This will help convey that you can think and execute in a campaign. It also proves that you can carry a look or style throughout a series of images and it wasn't just a one-time happy accident.

■ **PRACTICE. YES, I WAS TALKING ABOUT PRACTICE**

With the internet these days, you can search Google and figure out how to do almost anything. But just knowing how to do the mechanics won't make you a good artist. The only way to get better is practice, practice and more practice. All the books, classes and tutorials will only get you so far. Make it a goal to get better every day by practising.

■ **SHOW YOUR BEST WORK**

This is pretty common advice and everyone has probably heard it already, but I think it's that important to repeat. Show your best work and only your best work. If you have 12 incredible images and one weak one, guess which one everyone remembers? Yep, that crappy image that gave some doubt as to your ability as an artist. So, make it about quality and not quantity and let your best work represent you.



Bring MLS To Detroit: In an effort to draw more attention to the city of Detroit as a legitimate candidate for an MLS expansion team, I took on a personal project in support of the 'Bring MLS soccer to Detroit' initiative. I used MODO to create concrete particles, as well as the soccer goal in the street. With a lot of hard work, sweat, and getting my hands dirty... these images best represent what Detroit is all about.

© Mike Campau

I ♥ PHOTOREALISM

"MODO was the perfect solution for this project. With its realtime preview, I was able to instantly see my lighting and material setups, which was key to blending the CGI with the photography. Plus, its super fast render speeds helped me meet my very tight deadline!"



Mike Campau

Creative Director / Digital Artist

WINNER PHOTOSHOP WORLD GURU AWARD 2014 - COMMERCIAL

**THE
FOUNDRY.**

MODO

Client: LifeProof - www.lifeproof.com
CGI/Digital Art: Mike Campau - www.mikecampau.com
Photography: Tim Tadder - www.timtadder.com

LETTERS CAN KILL

LIGHTFARM BRAZIL'S MILTON MENEZES REVEALS HOW HE AND PARTNER RAFAEL VALLAPERDE CREATED AN AD TO SAVE LIVES

ABOUT THE ARTIST

MILTON MENEZES

Lightfarm Studios / Director at
Lightfarm Brazil
www.lightfarmbrasil.com



Lightfarm Studios is a growing multinational company specialising in image/content creation for advertising, with studios in New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, and agent representation care covering the USA, UK and China.

NAME OF PROJECT

LETTERS CAN KILL



Lightfarm Cadbury ad

Brazilian partners Rafael Vallaperde and Milton Menezes are certainly no strangers to creating great advertisements. As leaders of the latest addition to the Lightfarm

Studios international network with Lightfarm Brazil, which was launched in March 2014, they've worked with professionals such as Denny Monk, Simon McCormack, Mat Blamires, Grant Warwick, Chris Chui, Victor Maiorino and Jason King. This year, however, the incredible duo were commissioned to work on a brand new project like never before. It was an ad with a haltingly powerful message from art director Bernardo Romero: that letters could kill.

Working closely with Romero from the first pencil sketches to the final 3D piece, complete with the highest-resolution image that they've ever created, composed and finished in Photoshop, Vallaperde and Menezes needed to find a way to make the peril of texting while driving take on a whole new meaning – one that would stay in people's heads to save lives. "The agency brought up the idea and we were very keen to make it happen," begins Menezes. "The client had a very short time to do it and we've done so much more than we were asked for that I could call this particular project a miracle."

WHAT'S THE LIGHTFARM ATMOSPHERE LIKE, AND WHAT IS IT LIKE TO WORK THERE?

For me Lightfarm has always been pretty easy-going. I've worked in big studios before and I realised how much tension can build when delivering complex projects. At Lightfarm, I've always felt like we don't

need this tension in order to produce. By being very well managed, Lightfarm Studios always has things in control and we have never had to work overtime.

ARE THERE ANY PROJECTS YOU'VE DEVELOPED AS A STUDIO THAT YOU ARE VERY PROUD OF HAVING WORKED ON?

I love our mermaid from *Harmful Nature* and our astronaut from *The Verge*. They are not even professional pieces. We create freely to promote the company and develop ourselves as artists. On the professional side, I love the Cadbury campaigns we've built over these years. The Mountain Dew and Samsung Curved TV campaigns are also lovely.

CAN YOU GIVE US A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKFLOW FOR THE FINAL 'LETTERS CAN KILL' PIECE, AND HOW YOU USED PHOTOSHOP THROUGHOUT ITS CREATION?

As we didn't have much time at all, we started with simple pencil sketches to approve the idea with the art director. After we had it signed off we could build the 3D models to guide our Photoshop composition. In Photoshop I had to mix the extremely high-resolution photographs and CG models harmoniously to give it the high definition we were aiming for.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN PHOTOSHOP TOOLS, BRUSHES AND TECHNIQUES YOU USED TO COMPLETE THE PIECE?

Personally, I don't believe in shortcuts or preset brushes for creative retouching, unless I'm painting. From the sketching to shooting and post-production, I try to get my assets looking the best way possible, so I focus my



A final result



Studio crew



Detailing

work on what pleases my eyes. My technique is my workflow and I do what needs to be done. Ultimately, the best tips I can give are to always gather references, choose the best way to go forward with the project (shooting, modelling or retouching), take a good photograph, process your raws in Photoshop very well and make sure you have a good CG artist on your side if the project requires one. With great professionals on my side, my job gets easier and I go from fixing problems to making things look beautiful.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES YOU FOUND FROM WORKING ON THIS PROJECT OVERALL?

The biggest challenge was the resolution. We had thought about providing images as big as the digital back of our Hasselblad camera for each letter: it meant that our CG renders needed to match our two-and-a-half metres by 300dpi Photoshop composition. That's the biggest image we have ever built, and the client never required something this big. We set this challenge for ourselves so that we could maintain each detail for the camera, and zoom in so close that you can see the reflection of the photographer in the eyes of the letters.

“I guess we blew people's minds a little bit. The impact of this good mix of gross and funny really takes in people's attention. This was our goal for the campaign and I guess we got it right.”
Milton Menezes, director at Lightfarm Brazil



Alternative render

WHAT WAS THE REACTION LIKE ONCE THE WORLD SAW THE PROJECT?

I guess we blew people's minds a little bit. The impact of this good mix of gross and funny really takes in people's attention. This was our goal for the campaign and I guess we got it right.

The high-resolution crops of the images show how powerful the cameras and render technologies are getting. We are proud that we were able to build such

cool images in just three days with such an amazingly huge resolution.

IF YOU COULD GIVE ANY TIPS AND TRICKS TO OTHER ARTISTS HOPING TO CREATE MEMORABLE TYPOGRAPHIC DESIGNS USING PHOTOSHOP, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

On a typography job such as this one, you need to draw first. Drawing is the best way to express yourself in the best way. Professionally you need to approve everything you do and get the sign-offs to keep going forward in each job. So if you can sell your ideas with your concept art, good on you! Design is the foundation of the artists here at Lightfarm.

BOXING CLEVER

MEET THE STUDIO THAT DOES IT ALL, AND DOES IT ALL WELL. BOXING CLEVER IS A CREATIVE AGENCY, PUBLISHING HOUSE AND RECORD LABEL IN ONE

Boxing Clever is a creative advertising agency that is proud to be able to offer diversity, confidently sticking its fingers into many, many pies, but always with the same high-quality and consistent results.

It describes itself as being able to do “a little of everything, and do it well”, which is a big claim. It offers interactive marketing, promotional materials, advertising and branding to commercial clients looking to sell, sell, sell. It also wants to help solve problems, suggest solutions and come up with ideas that the client might never have thought of. And it's not just in creative advertising that Boxing Clever is making waves – although it does a grand job of this, working with Fortune 500 spirit clients, an international airport and local entrepreneurs – but it has its own publishing company and record label to boot. We were certainly intrigued by this Saint Louis-based studio space with huge ambitions.

It certainly stands out from its peers in both its output and the way that the team works. The studio is a combination of artists and strategists who care deeply about both the client's work, as well as the studio's own work. Everyone works on projects for both clients and Boxing Clever, and partner/ executive creative director Jim Harper thinks this is what makes the studio stand out from the crowd: “Having our own products gives us first-hand knowledge of what our clients are going through on a daily basis, because we also go through similar issues. We create our publications from scratch, source the materials and printing, and market, sell and socialise them. We get vinyl pressed, albums mixed, and then make records, CDs and digitally distributed music that hopefully people love as much as we do. Taking risks like this gives us personal equity in every brand we work on. It also causes us to pay attention to a huge amount of detail in both.”

So how did the studio become what it is today? It was originally called 4 Alarm Studio, which was a visual company that helped agencies to do high-end retouching, 3D, keylining, imagery, comps and pitches. “We started helping large agencies win large pieces of business and realised how bad our business plan was,” admits Harper. “We also helped brands directly manage their imagery and assets through robust CMS systems. We re-branded as Boxing Clever and began to go after the work as an agency, and have grown from 7 to 30 people in the meantime.” That enlarged team is brought together in a shared vision, and tied in an effective workflow



Studio team: The Boxing Clever team in the studio



ABOUT THE STUDIO

BOXING CLEVER
www.boxing-clever.com
[@boxingcleverstl](https://twitter.com/boxingcleverstl)

"Boxing Clever is an ad agency that studies the sweet science of marketing, branding and design. The agents of Boxing Clever garner insights from purchase behaviour, personality profiles and cultural trends, and apply creative thinking, experiential ideas and artful execution to help build brands."



Dave Scott
President, CEO



Kevin Ridgeway
Digital Director, IT Director



Jim Harper
Partner, Executive
Creative Director



“Having our own products gives us first-hand knowledge of what our clients are going through on a daily basis, because we also go through similar issues”



Conference rooms: The studio has three conference rooms to host its client meetings

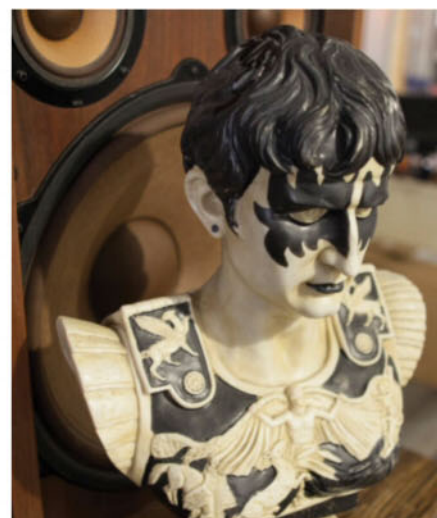


Listening booth: The studio has vinyl isolation booths to listen to vinyl with headphones on and escape

Workspace: A look at the working spaces in the studio



Portraits: Portraits of the studio team on the walls



Accessories: Quirky extras adorn the studio space, such as this 'Julius Simmons' bust

system where everything Boxing Clever does goes through many people and roles, as Harper explains: "For example, our larger clients begin with a brief, which our creative [team] builds visuals and communication from. Then the work goes through an approval process. In the meantime, our production team is figuring out the best methods to execute the visuals. This could be through a digital imaging execution, or a 3D or illustrative option. The goal is to get the most absolutely beautiful outcome given the budget and timeline."

This process allows the team to be very involved in projects and the briefs that they are set by the client, and in some cases will revise briefs, or even

write them themselves. "The brief is usually based on a focus launch, or a marketing issue the brand is having. So when our idea evolves, there are many instances where the brief needs to be addressed to solve the problem."

The studio space itself is very open, with various areas for different types of work and communication. There is a large common area that is used for social gatherings and records. Some of the additional space features include a vintage hot-stamp press with metal letterpress letters and flat files; a Sixties Brother record player with working 8-track; two vinyl isolation booths to listen to vinyl with headphones on and escape; and three conference rooms.

The working area is packed with technology, software and hardware. The Adobe suite plays its part, with Photoshop and Illustrator proving indispensable to the team. Strata Design 3D CX software is also commonly used. Kevin Ridgeway is the IT director and runs the technical side of the business as well as being creative: "I run, manage and operate four RAID level 5+ hardware servers. I like Hyper-V and run six virtual servers atop two Windows 2012 hosts. I also manage the network, security and asset management software and hardware, and work off of three Mac Pros. IT equipment and software is a great place to give the right side of your brain some rest."



■ WOODFORD RESERVE DOUBLE OAKED

KEVIN RIDGEWAY TALKS US THROUGH THIS PROJECT, RETOUCHING PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHY AND MAPPING LABELS ONTO THE BOTTLE



01 | ORGANISE PHOTO FILES

Evaluate everything provided by the photographer. Typically there will be various images shot focusing on different parts of, in this case, a bottle and glass. These shown were not photographed together. Label, liquid, reflections and cap are common points of emphasis and were all shot separately.



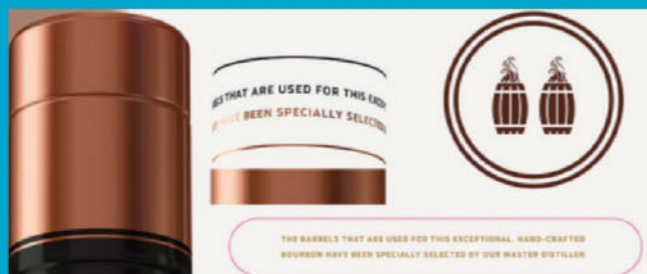
02 | COMPOSE IMAGES INTO A SINGLE FILE

Combine the various photos into a master PSB file; I use the Load Into Stack script. I mask everything and retouch away areas covering or surrounding the labels to be replaced. Next, I retouch everything, removing artefacts. Big brushes and conversions from RGB to CMYK create banding. Studio white cards add authenticity to the reflections, but typically need some shaping.



03 | ISOLATE AREAS NEEDING ATTENTION

Isolate key areas and push around a Curves or Levels adjustment temporarily to discover where highs and lows reside, then select and enhance those areas using masks. Produce the mask from a single channel that can [generate] the most variation or isolation. You can apply adjustments to the colour image for the purpose of clarifying your mask, then discard them when the mask is complete.



04 | ENGINEER DIGITAL COMPONENTS

Use external files as needed to add elements not in the original photography or to replace parts of poor quality. I use a 3D program to generate type that is mapped onto the lower bottle and neck. You can make a mask from the resulting art. I built the cap in 3D since one did not exist at the time of the photoshoot.



05 | UNIFY VARIATIONS IN LIGHTING

Edges not directly in the light will get darker and softer on a black background. Colour will always change as a result of the effluence of light. Get a sample of the product to determine colour. View the liquid in daylight through a window and use a container that is the same thickness and depth. For every area you brighten, there will be a resulting shadow.

▶ When it comes to key software, of course Photoshop is up there, as Ridgeway explains: "It's the way I retouch photographic imagery and build textures for 3D illustration and animation. Drop an office printer scan of a sketch, object or diagram into Photoshop and you've created a blueprint for anything. Mechanical elements like sprites and animated GIFs for digital work originate in Photoshop. Movies, websites and interfaces all are improved and assisted by the application. With Photoshop you can do anything."

Ridgeway continues with an example of a project where Photoshop was key to the studio's output. He had been tasked with creating comprehensive 3D signs resembling old motel or diner styles, one for daylight and one in the dark: "Although a 3D application forms the foundation of the work, Photoshop was indispensable in the creation of masks, textures and various forms of distress. Both environments provided interesting challenges ranging from dry, stark lighting to glowing auras and transmissive, radiant light."

Boxing Clever is not adverse to a challenge, rising to meet it and finding solutions to help achieve its goals. In one large holiday project for a notable spirits brand, the team had to work with multiple items of various textures. The items were arranged into the form of a design at a photoshoot on a tabletop. Although the look was natural, the arrangement required various forms of modification and arrangement. The comp had some items in the collage appearing to hover with shadows cast further

“ [Photoshop is] the way I retouch photographic imagery and build textures for 3D illustration and animation ”



than what was realistic. The team also had to include a dynamic effect of some kind from imagination. This was the task set to Kevin Ridgeway: "To overcome this challenge I separated every item from its background, engineered a texture that matched the photographic background and pushed forward. Like a painting, projects come to life while you work and obstacles disappear. I was told when just a boy to take things with a grain of salt. Unfortunately, I misunderstood the directions and thought I was told to 'take it with a great assault'. Put something in motion and it will assist you in getting there."

Being able to step up to difficult tasks and move with the times is important when it comes to looking forward for the studio. It already produces

high-quality work in a number of different areas and has its own ventures as well, but the team has big ambitions and certainly shows no signs of slowing down. "I see technology products being added to our repertoire of items we make, so that we can have a well-rounded portfolio of our own," says Jim Harper. "I think the growth of digital will bring a new set of challenges to our creative. While file sizes get more manageable due to the use of screens as the finished products, the variation in needed files makes it very complicated. The complexity of these will mean we will come up with new methods in Photoshop to create multiple files that appear on multiple sites. "We'll be watching in anticipation to see what Boxing Clever comes up with next.

■ A DAY IN THE LIFE OF JIM HARPER

WE SPEND A DAY WITH A PARTNER AT BOXING CLEVER



09:30 | COFFEE BREAK
Large amounts of caffeine. We are not a 'natural' or 'organic' company; we use whatever means to get adrenaline moving. If that means we take the hard stuff, espresso it is.

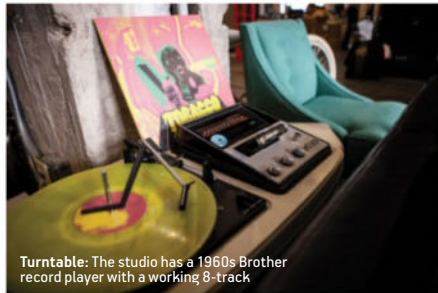


10:46 | NEW RELEASE
One of our record label's new releases is in. In this case, Bruiser Queen's *Sweet Static*. We'll be doing radio promotion with these. Vinyl to follow.



12:00 | PREPARE BOOKS
We hand-pick bloggers to review our products, and send out individual press packages to each of them. Here we are preparing press copies of our book, *Archibald's Next Big Thing*.

“When our idea evolves, there are many instances where the brief needs to be addressed to solve the problem”



Turntable: The studio has a 1960s Brother record player with a working 8-track

TOP 5 PRODUCTION TIPS

Kevin Ridgeway unveils the Boxing Clever secrets for seamless production

■ WATCH THE EDGES

Attention to edges makes all the difference. Making a mask is only the first step. How it's softened, blurred, vignetted, transitioned and stippled are all indispensable considerations. Edges define whether or not the imagery is believable and familiar.

■ PHOTOSHOP BLENDING ADJUSTMENTS

Experiment with adjustment layers by changing their blending mode. If you're modifying a tonal range in order to affect contrast, changing the blending mode from Normal to Luminosity will affect the darks and lights without significantly affecting colour.

■ USE SOURCE PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography of recognisable items like fruit, breads, drinks and vegetables are all images you can easily search for on the internet. Looking at 50 pictures of a pumpkin can guide you to a colour you like; just take some measurements to match that colour.

■ MANUAL COLOUR CORRECTION

When adjusting a sensitive colour, be sure to move the window from one side of the monitor to the other. It will almost always be different. A test was given to press operators on three different shifts and they all saw a colour differently (depending on) the time of day they drove into work: morning light, high noon light and evening light.

■ WORK RIGHT

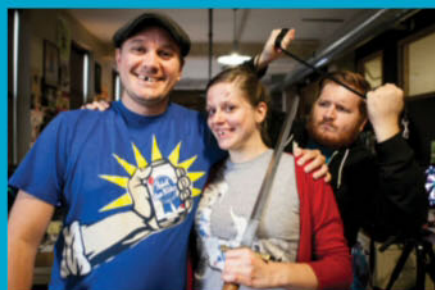
Maintain good posture and work from a tablet. Work on a matte screen monitor; shiny glass reflecting the entire room onto your work is not a good idea. Familiarise yourself with the numbers and learn the percentages of fundamental colours. You can trust what you know.



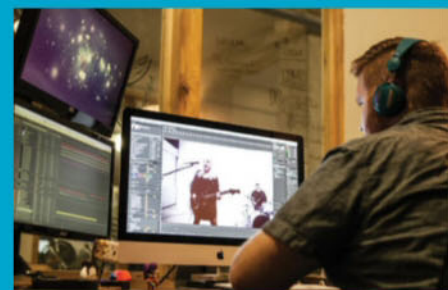
Music Player: This was used for the previous Boxing Clever Records website. It was a working audio player built from 3D images and sprites



13:37 | **OFFICE FUN**
Fight club! Since we have a large collection of vinyls, we will also play a recent purchase made by someone in the office or spin something in-house from Boxing Clever Records.



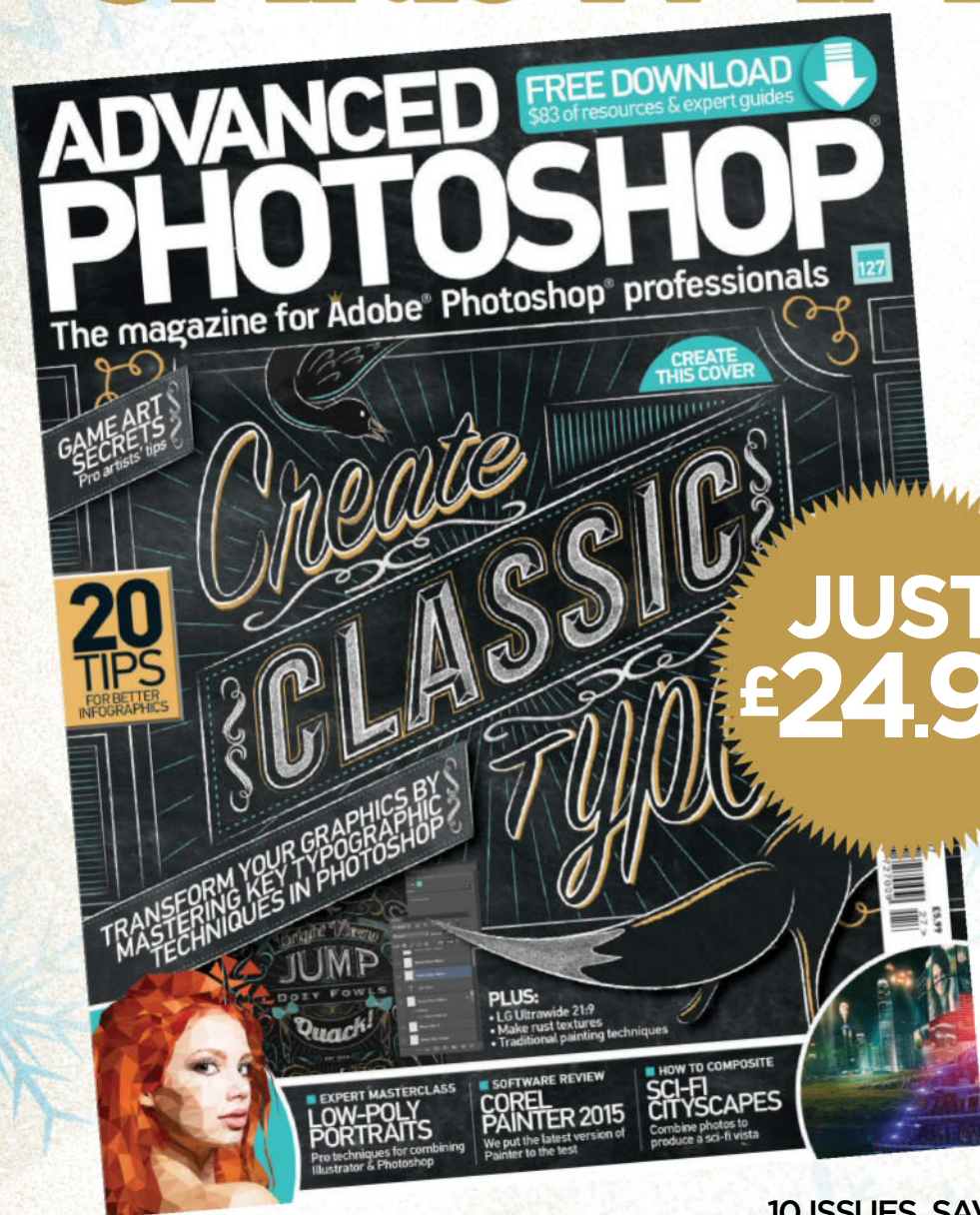
13:38 | **THE TEAM**
All are friends after fight club. It's back to work and answering more emails after lunch. A quick coffee run and a meeting followed by quick turnaround projects.



16:32 | **EDITING**
Editing session of a music video for one of our bands. Darrick is our motion designer and editor, and has been working on a music video for one of the bands on our record label.

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Promo code XMAS141

The background is a light blue grid with various colorful geometric shapes (squares, triangles, polygons) in shades of blue, green, purple, and red scattered across it. In the center, there is a large, stylized black '25' logo. Below it, the text 'TIPS FOR WORKING WITH' is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below that, the word 'VECTORS' is in a very large, bold, black, sans-serif font.

25

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH

VECTORS

WHETHER YOU WANT TO TAKE CONTROL OF PHOTOSHOP'S OWN VECTOR TOOLS, OR FIND A BETTER WAY OF WORKING WITH VECTOR IMAGES CREATED IN OTHER PROGRAMS, WE HAVE A BLEND OF TOP TIPS TO HELP YOU OUT

01. ADD SPARKLE IN PHOTOSHOP

For graphic designer and digital artist Angel Alejandro (www.behance.net/angelalejandro), Photoshop is key in making vector designs created in Adobe Illustrator have more impact: "Undoubtedly one of the great advantages of initiating a project in Illustrator and finalising it in Photoshop is that you have more tools to deal with vectors, opening many possibilities. I'm convinced that if I didn't use Photoshop, the results would be very different." He is also a fan of the Pen tool in Photoshop, as it enables him to refine or add to his vector shapes: "The Pen tool allows you to solve things you forgot to do in Illustrator, enhancing [the design] in the middle of the process."

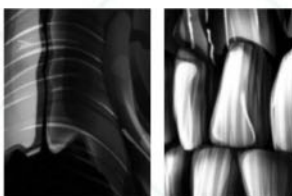
For this particular image, the basic shape is set out in Illustrator to give the full body of the eagle. From here, Alejandro started to add some 'sparkle' but the result was "insufficient", which is when he decided to switch to Photoshop: "[I needed to add] way more volume to the artwork, so I transferred to Photoshop, which has the advantage in manipulating lights and shadows by offering a simpler and more manageable way to do it. I used the tone and saturation tools, Color Balance and Selective Color to give emphasis to the vector shapes and differentiate them from one another. I finally applied a Curves adjustment to add intensity."



© Angel Alejandro

02. PAY ATTENTION TO DETAILS

"When it comes to creating vectors, never skip the details," says graphic designer and illustrator Jeremy Young (jeremyyoungcreative.com), who is known for his bright designs created using the vector tools within Photoshop. "Working with vectors can be a laborious task, and often designers and artists will cut corners and leave small details out in order to finish a piece quickly. A good vector design involves a lot more than just the basic composition and elements. Detailing means adding layers of light and shadow to otherwise flat shapes, and therefore making your designs more interesting overall. Spend time zoomed in at 200 or 300 per cent, making those additional paths and adding that little bit of shading or highlights, even if you think it will only make a slight difference. If you are struggling for time, then you don't have to add detail to every area of the project; duplicate what you've made so far, then warp, transform, stretch and erase until you can manipulate that piece of shadow/light to fit another area of the design."



© Jeremy Young

03. BE CONSISTENT

"Make sure all of your elements work together," says Jeremy Young. "There are many different techniques and styles of vectoring, and it is important to make sure that everything in your design is consistent. For example, once I have a few elements coloured in my illustration, I like to use the Eyedropper tool to find those colours, then choose a new colour that is similar by sliding the Hue control in the Color Picker. This means that I don't have to decide on a new colour from scratch for every element, and it also means that all the colours will be in the same range and will work together. It is of paramount importance to regularly zoom out to see your entire design and check if everything is cohesive. If something is out of place, then go back and redo it until it seamlessly flows with the rest of the design."



© Jeremy Young

04. DYNAMIC ONE-COLOUR VECTOR SHADING

OLIVER SMITH AKA MEGALOMEDIA DESIGNS (SUCCESSBEAUTIFULLY.COM) SHARES HIS PHOTOSHOP METHOD FOR ADDING DEPTH TO MONOCHROME IMAGERY

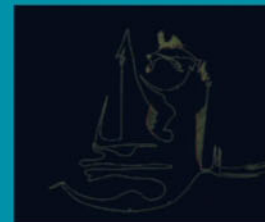
01 GET STARTED

Select the Pen tool. In the Tool Options, in the drop-down menu, select Shape rather than Path. Draw the outermost line of your shape along with a swooping line where the innermost point of the shadows will reach. Set the shapes to transparent fill, give them a soft-coloured outline and then lock the objects.



02 BUILD GUIDELINES

These will be your guidelines; colour coding can help avoid confusion in complex pieces. Draw over the outermost line until reaching the shadows, and then create straight, jagged lines back and forth reaching from the outermost line of the shape to the innermost reaches of the fades.



03 BONUS TIP

When it comes to creating artwork like this, don't be afraid to experiment with different depths of the shadow as well as spacing between the triangles to change the dynamics.



© Megalomeia Designs



Pen tool clipping masks: "I like to create shapes with the Pen tool (set to Shape and not Path) and use these as bases for clipping masks, adding colours, shadows and highlights on different layers."

The method: "Once satisfied with a shape, I make a new layer, place it above the shape layer, Ctrl/right-click and select Create Clipping Mask. I then add the effects of choice. This can be done with several layers on the same base shape."

Make changes: "What I like about this method is that you can make changes to your base shape with the Pen and Direct Selection tools, which gives a lot of control."

Illustrator shapes: If you prefer to do your shapes in Illustrator, that's fine as well. Import the shapes as Shape layers and they are just as editable as the shapes you create in Photoshop."

Inspiration: "A designer who is very skilled and who has perfected this method is Rik Oostenbroek (www.rikoostenbroek.com); go check out his work if you want to see what's possible using this method."

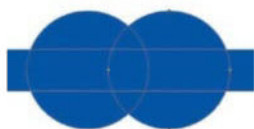
© Andreas Johansson Design

05. VECTOR SHAPES AS CLIPPING MASKS

ANDREAS JOHANSSON (WWW.ANDREASJD.COM) UNVEILS HIS METHOD FOR USING PEN TOOL SHAPES

BELIEVE

06. UNDERSTANDING PATH OPERATIONS



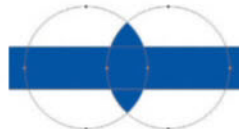
Combine shapes

When you create multiple shapes in one document, you can now merge them into a single shape layer, but still be able to work with the individual shapes that make up the merged layer. With all of your shape layers selected, hit Cmd/Ctrl+E to make a merged shape. You can now use Path Operations (in the Properties window or Tool Options bar) to play with the shapes. The first option, Combine Shapes, simply shows all of the active shapes.



Subtract front shape

The second Path Operation lets you subtract the front shape from the other shapes, enabling you to make a cut through the shapes. To do this, you need to use the Direct Selection tool and not the Selection tool, as this enables you to pick the shape you want to subtract. You can select more than one shape. With the shape(s) selected, this operation cuts that shape out, leaving the remaining ones visible.



Intersect shape areas

The next operation shows the areas of the selected shape(s) that intersect with other shapes. It takes some trial and error to get to grips with how this works, as you need to make sure that you are selecting the right shapes – this is straightforward when you are only working with a few, but multiple shapes can get more fiddly. Luckily, this is a non-destructive process and can be easily rectified.



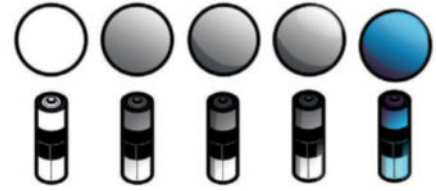
Exclude overlapping shapes

This final option removes areas of the selected shape(s) that overlap, leaving the remaining areas visible. It is important to know that all shapes on any one merged shape layer must have the same fill and stroke properties. Also, you may need to use the Path Arrangement options from the same area in Tool Options to determine which shape sits on top of which for the Path Operations to work effectively.



© Lars Sowig 2014

07. ADD DEPTH TO VECTORS



Lars Sowig (www.sowig.net) is an art director, concept artist and illustrator, who uses Photoshop tools to add depth to his artworks and give a 3D-esque effect, as he explains: "I use the Path tool to give the surface I'm working on some depth. The shapes I am drawing define the shading of a specific object. I do this by only using two shapes: one for the light spot, where the light hits the surface; and one on the physical opposite site of the object that defines the area for a hard shadow. Both shapes also influence the perception of what the material is about. Strong reflections will give the object a kind of metallic look, for instance. If I were to ripple the shadow, it results in [it] looking like a fluid."

"For the reflection areas I use the built-in White-to-Transparent layer style, which can be appended to your styles manually via the settings icon in the top-right corner once you're inside that menu. This preset is called 'Web-Styles'."

"Combining this simple technique with your colour palettes and gradients can lead very easily to great results. Other than the shadow shapes, I'm allowing the shape for the reflection to go halfway over the outlines of my objects. This magically adds something three-dimensional to it."

08. BUILD IMAGES WITH VECTOR OUTLINES

CHRISTINE ROY, AKA AGENT ILLUSTRATEUR (www.agentillustrateur.com) TALKS US THROUGH HOW SHE USED VECTORS IN THIS ARTWORK

Simple workflow: "I love simple shapes and clean designs in my workflow, so I do love vector masks and I use them all the time."

Pen tool outlines: "What I do quite often is to outline the shape I want with the Pen tool, and when it's still active, I'll convert it to a vector mask and fill it with the colour of my choice."

Designing the image: "In this case I outline the shape of the man first with the Pen tool (it helps to have a reference image). I then outlined the wheelchair and the wheels separately using the same technique."

Custom vector shapes: "Adding a custom vector shape is also useful; in this case it was the maple leaf on the athlete."

Adding details: The detail work is all done with the Path tool, creating geometric shapes and using the vector mask to keep the non-destructive feature.

Fully vector: "Since the client wanted to use the illustration at a large and small scale, everything but the texture and a bit of Dodge and Burn is vector-based."

© Agent Illustrateur

► 09. MASTER THE PEN TOOL

Freelance artist Joshua Smith (<http://jspsfx.deviantart.com>) is a fan of the Pen tool for creating his artworks: "I create primarily using the Pen tool in Photoshop. I keep the Eyedropper hotkey bound to 'Z' and the Pen tool bound to 'X'. So my left hand has access to Undo, Pan, Eyedropper and the Pen tool in one small area. You might find your own system, but the point is to optimise your process. Keep the awkward motions to a minimum and focus on your linework.

"With my process streamlined, it's a matter of working with the strengths and limitations of the Pen tool. The work can feel tedious at times, but it shouldn't be difficult. If the tool seems to have a mind of its own, then you haven't intuitively grasped its behaviour.

"The best advice I could give is to practise illustrating until paths are so predictable that potential curves are anticipated and made to fit the style of illustration you choose. In time you will have an ever-evolving repertoire of movements and contours that you know will illustrate cleanly."



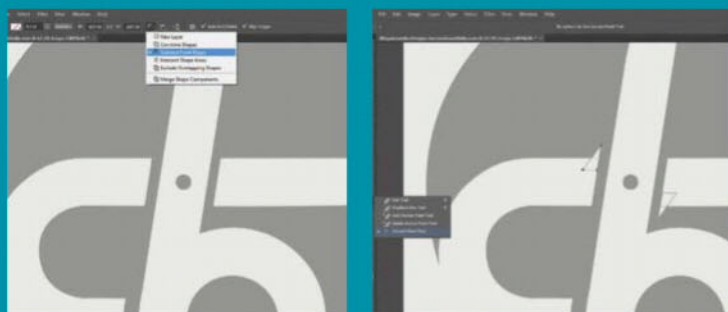
© Joshua Smith

10. ADD IMPACT TO LOGOS

Graphic artist Oliver Smith, aka Megalomeia Designs (SuccessBeautifully.com) tells us how to add subtle points to signify depth within one-colour vector shapes: "Logos and iconography often contain overlapping elements that fail to distinguish any depth. This can affect the flow of the eye and immediate interpretation of the symbol. By adding subtle points around the gaps of two intersecting parts, we can signify which appears to be on top.

"To do this, click on your Shape layer, select the Pen tool and open the drop-down menu for Path Operations. Choose Subtract Front Shape and then draw in your points.

"Think of these as shadows; they will be on whichever part is to appear below and should alternate direction. Face them towards busier areas of the symbol if possible. Once you deselect your layer it will then remove those points from your symbol, so you can use the Convert Point tool to get them right where you like before committing."

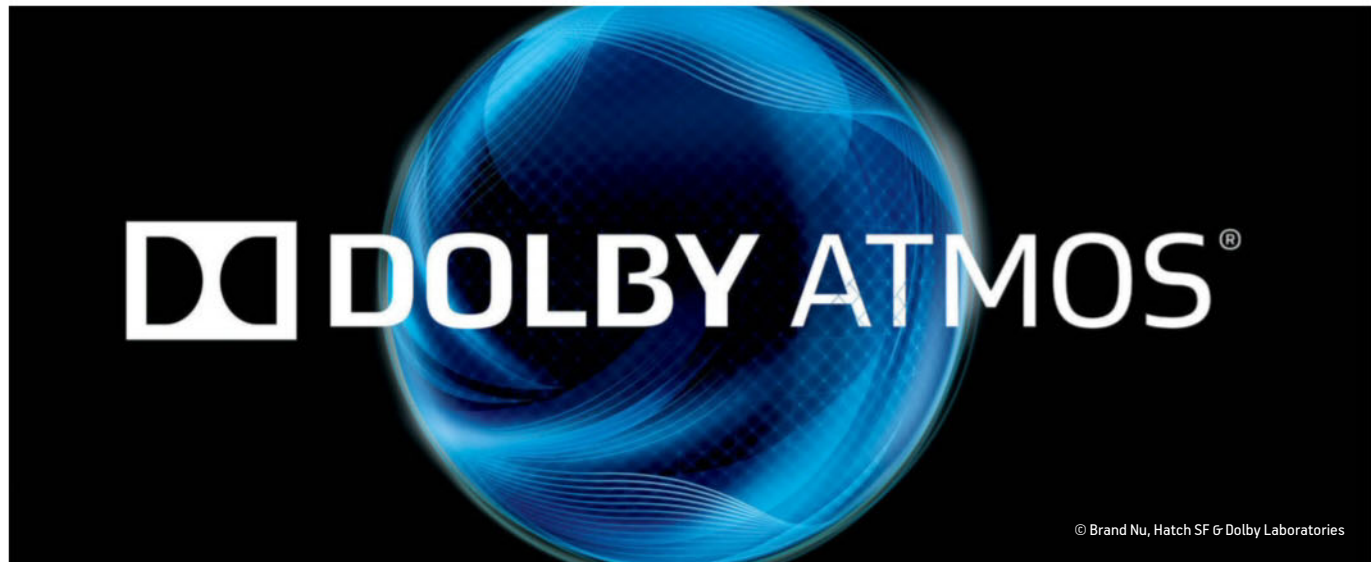


© Megalomeia Designs

11. ILLUSTRATOR'S PATTERN TOOL WITH PHOTOSHOP'S SPHERIZE FILTER

Creative director and designer Radim Malinic (www.brandnu.co.uk) perfected a technique for this project that uses the strength of both Photoshop and Illustrator: "This is a pretty fun technique to bypass any need for 3D renders or additional software outside Adobe CC. The project brief here required digital illustration of spheres with a various level of detail and intricacy. I wanted to construct these spheres with interesting depth and textures, and I achieved this through Illustrator, and using Photoshop to finish.

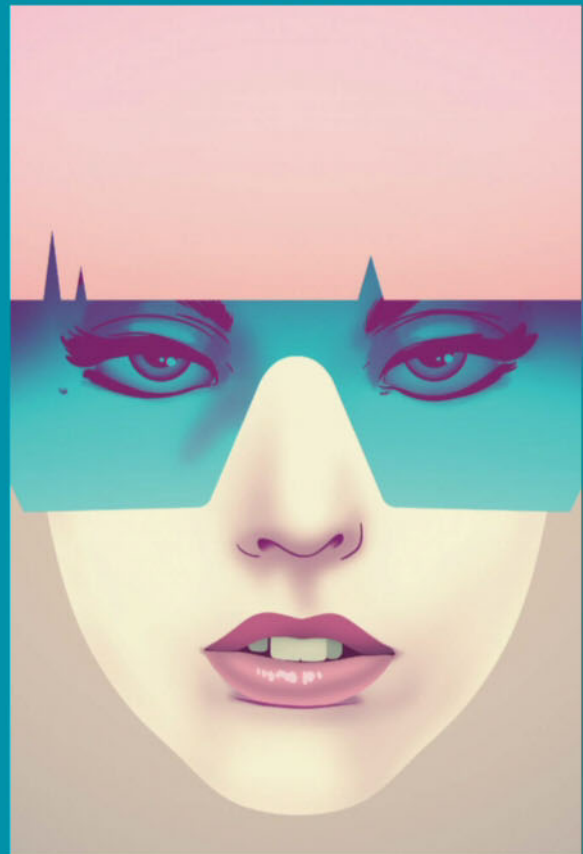
"This sphere, for Dolby Atmos Home, was started with exploration of the Pattern tool in Illustrator. I have gone to multiply a simple 'X'-shaped element to build up the outer mesh. The flat pattern was pasted in Photoshop and rasterised for use with Filter>Distort>Spherize. Each pattern was stretched twice at 100% to achieve the desired effect. The repeat of the Cmd/Ctrl+F shortcut makes it easy if you need to repeat the same step more than once. However, this can be a question of trial and error when testing the thickness of pattern lines and their look after the effect is applied. The final sphere is built up from four patterns that use different cell sizes, therefore giving the final article a look of a three-dimensional object in depth and feel."



12. BUILD LARGE-SCALE DESIGNS

Andrés Rivera aka nook (<http://raccoonnook.com>) shares his work process for this Illustrator and Photoshop, large-scale artwork: "Before starting a final [artwork], I go through a handful of sketches. In this case I blocked it out with colour, which gives the client a nice preview of the final without putting too much work in. I knew the final image had to be printed at an extremely large size for a poster and I wanted the shapes to be crisp and clean, even at that size.

"Using the sketch as a template, I created the main shapes in Illustrator. With the shapes imported into a high-res Photoshop file, I inked the rest of the interior detail of the face with just a regular hard brush. I wanted a slight contrast between Illustrator's clean edges and my more brushy freehand lines in Photoshop. Then with a massive soft brush, I layered in shadows for dimension. I finished off with some overlays to mix it all together and give it a soft lighting effect."

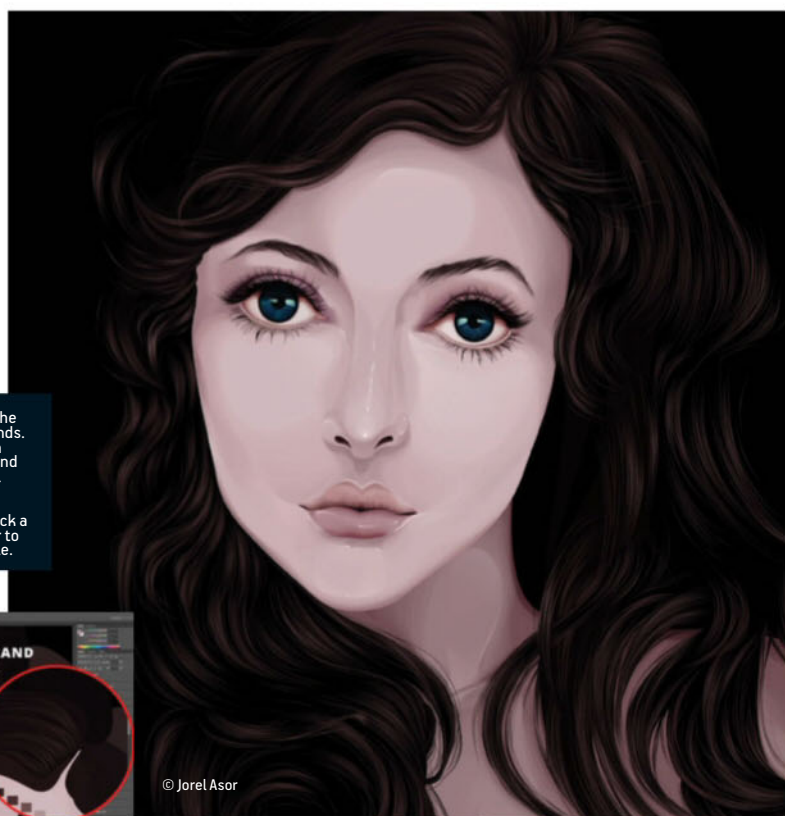
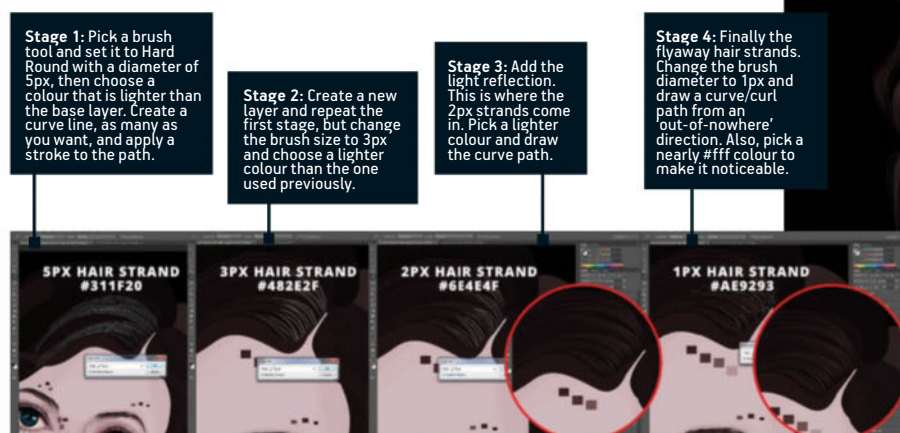


© Andrés Rivera

► 13. WORK ON HAIR IN VEXEL PORTRAITS

Jorel Asor (www.behance.net/orjel) is a web designer and graphic artist. As well as creating clean and functional website designs, he also works on vexel portraits – images created in Photoshop using the vector tools (usually the Pen tool) and turning a source photograph into a digital work of art. He most often gets asked how he works on hair in the image and has these tips to share:

"First, I use a shape tool to create a base that will be a guide when doing the hair strands later on. I normally use three or four colours for the strands. The base layer should have the darkest part of the hair blocked in. For the hair strands, I often use the Pen tool's Path option and apply a stroke to the path. I usually start with the biggest strands (around 5px) and work down to the tiniest strands (around 1px). The colour should also go from dark to light." In the annotation, Asor shows us the four key stages that go into building up hair designs.



14. BUILD A VEXEL

PENI SANTOSO ([HTTP://PENISANTOSO.DEVIANTART.COM](http://PENISANTOSO.DEVIANTART.COM)) EXPLAINS HOW HE CREATES VEXELS FROM A SOURCE IMAGE

01 | SPLIT INTO THREE

What I often do when making vexels is duplicate the object three times: the first is the original, the second is brighter and the third is darker. Using these duplicates will help me trace the dark and light areas.



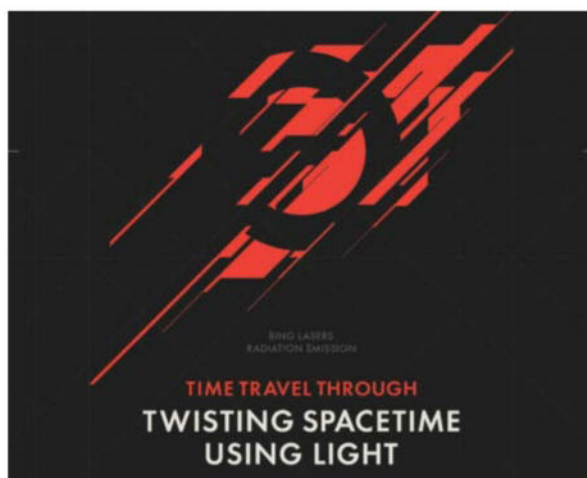
02 | START TRACING

In the next step, I start using the Pen tool (set to Shape) and trace in some parts of the subject's colouring. In order to do this, I use the Pen tool with the Combine Shapes option selected and work on one colour. I then do the same for the other colours.



03 | REFER TO DUPLICATES

If you're having difficulty isolating the details in dark and light areas of the image, then bring in a layer showing the lighter or darker duplicates that you created earlier as a guide to help you work on these areas.



15. CREATE GEOMETRIC PATTERNS

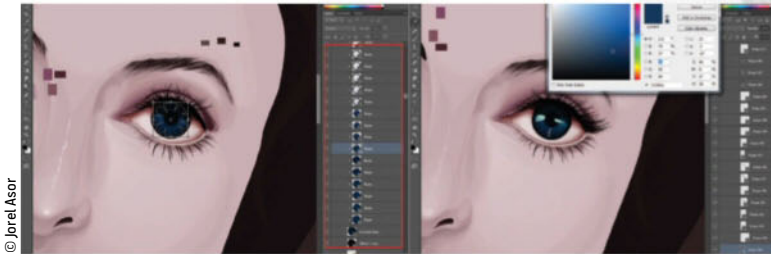
Jorge Marín Gispert, aka Metric72 (www.metric72.com), explains how he created this image: "Applying a personal grid over a squared pattern helps to place vectorial graphic elements and also determines the hierarchy of the text. Layout and grid design is subject to creative vision and method, but is important to provide proportional spatial references before starting to expand our graphical elements."

"First, I determine the direction that I want for the final shape in order to concrete the shape of vectorial elements and other elements. Parallelograms can be created from a rectangle, which is displaced horizontally by shifting the top two vertexes right."

"I clone this first piece multiple times to create different elements by changing size and angles. Next, I do the 'Gestalten' effect using Illustrator's Pathfinder tool. I cut linear shapes using the Minus Front pathfinder option, selecting the central circle too. I can incorporate additional parallelogram shapes to achieve a more complex design."

16. DRAWING DETAILED EYES

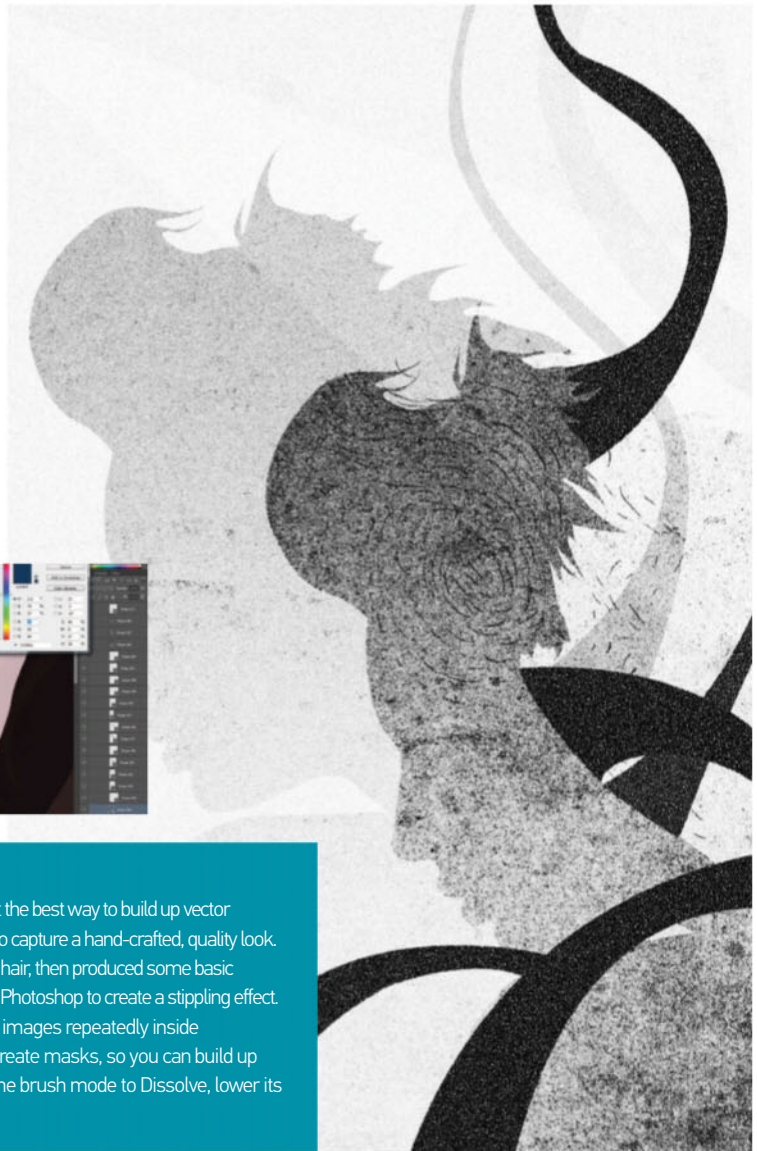
Jorel Asor (www.behance.net/orjel) gives us his top tips for drawing eyes in portrait images to maintain realism: "If we look closely at a high-definition image of a human eye, the iris is composed of tiny lines pointing to the pupil. [In order to replicate this], first is to draw an almond shape. Add another curve on top as a guideline for the eyelashes. I recently found a new way [for creating] a lively iris with Photoshop's Ellipse tool and shape layers. First, use the Ellipse tool to draw a circle for the iris and another smaller circle for the pupil. Create a flower-like shape, similar to what you've seen on a source photo. Pick your desired colour. Decrease the Opacity to 30% to easily blend the colours, and use a clipping mask to have a more defined boundary for the iris. Duplicate the flower layer and rotate to the left and to the right using Free Transform. Keep duplicating the flower layer and adjust its size with Free Transform, or move the anchor points until it looks like it is moving close to the pupil. Finally, add the other details. Draw a few tiny lines with a lighter contrast colour. For the eyelashes, it doesn't always have to be even. Some need to stand out, longer and thicker among the others. And always use shape layers."



17. ADD TEXTURE TO VECTORS

Art director Parker Gibson (www.behance.net/helloparkergibson) suggests that the best way to build up vector imagery is through the use of textures: "Explore filters and use adjustment layers to capture a hand-crafted, quality look. In this image I used Photoshop to outline a basic photo and apply my own ideas of hair, then produced some basic shapes. I gathered various stock images of textures and used the Pointillize filter in Photoshop to create a stippling effect."

"You can also begin to build up unique visuals by duplicating and overlaying images repeatedly inside themselves. Also, keep in mind that with vector shapes you can use them to create masks, so you can build up texture inside or outside of the masks. Using a soft-edged brush you can set the brush mode to Dissolve, lower its Opacity rate and really create some dynamic texturing."



18. MERGE VECTORS AND STOCK

Designer Oliver Gareis (www.olivergareis.com) combines Pen tool shapes with stock photography to create his artwork. "First, I put the rough stock images into the artwork and use a thin brush to draw the shapes onto the photos. I then start using the Pen tool to draw the forms and shapes, using the original brush lines as a guide."

"At this point it's good to have a big collection of gradients in the library in Photoshop. The final artwork should be able to showcase a variety of colours. I chose many fresh colours in this piece; it's good to have a mix of pastel colours and bright colours."

"The forms and shapes you work with should have a good 'flow'. I work with two different combinations: a light gradient shape with a dark 1-3px outline (gradient: light blue to light turquoise, outline: dark blue); and a light 1-3px outline with a dark gradient shape (gradient: pastel red to pastel yellow, outline: light yellow). In Photoshop you have the opportunity to choose where the outline is, ie right into the shape, outside of it and directly onto the shape. You have to try out the options to see which is the best for your shape."

"As a final step, you should add the Add Noise filter to all of your vector shapes. This helps to merge the vector styles with the stock images. Otherwise it feels like a foreign body."



▶ 19. WORK WITH ILLUSTRATOR VECTORS IN PHOTOSHOP

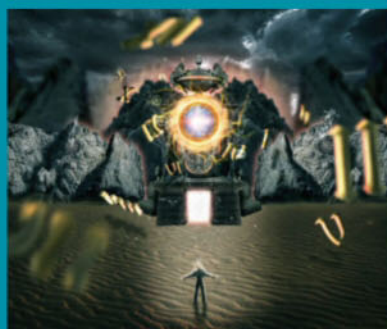
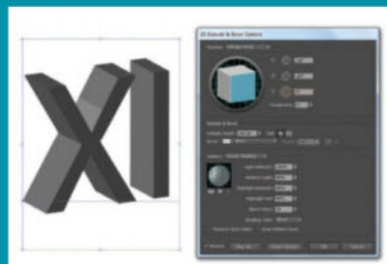
"One of my favourite tips is to work the basic visual elements in Illustrator as a base; you can always come back to do some tweaking," says Christine Roy (www.agentillustrateur.com). "I then import the file into Photoshop as a Smart Object so I can perform non-destructive work like sizing and adding filters, even altering the overall shape. I'll then use the Pen tool to add additional elements to the composition, keeping them as vector layers for more freedom (like more trees, buildings, people – always by using basic shapes and grouping them together). To create another level or detailing, I'll use the Magic Wand to select a few elements, convert the selection to a path, creating a new layer, and do some shadow/highlight work, adding depth to the final outcome (still in vector fill). I add a final touch of texture with the blending mode, and voilà!"



© Agent Illustrateur

20. PLAY WITH 3D VECTORS

Vector files don't always have to be flat; you can create three-dimensional vector images and process them within Photoshop, helping you to add depth to your artworks. Photoshop's built-in and constantly evolving 3D tools are a real bonus in this instance. Fernando Matos (www.behance.net/fjartdesign) is a graphic designer from Puerto Rico, and he has experience with using 3D vector files in Photoshop. His top tip is: "When creating a 3D vector file, try making it in a grey colour. That way it will be easier to process in Photoshop and make the necessary adjustments to the correct colours you are looking for. Before exporting to Photoshop, if you used fonts, create outlines and use the pathfinder to merge the paths, as this way you won't have any banding on them."

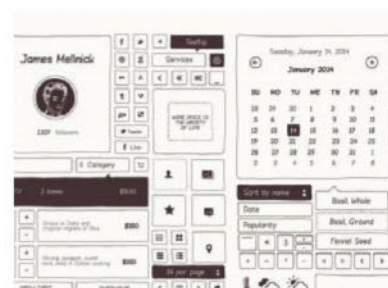


© Fernando Matos 2014

21. FOUR PLACES TO GET VECTOR ASSETS

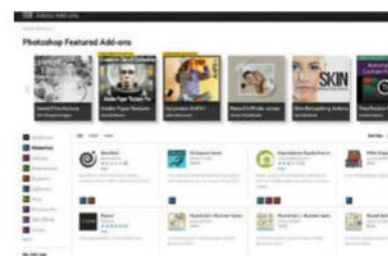
Basiliq by Cloud Castle Group

Design collective Cloud Castle unveiled this collection of over 300 free icons for designers last year. The aim was to offer high-quality icons to interface designers wanting to create exceptional mock-ups, all created in a handwritten, sketch style – for free! The collection has every element that you might need to design a UI, which can be easily added to your Photoshop library. The set can be downloaded from <http://cloudcastlegroup.com/design/basiliq>.



Adobe add-ons

Adobe has its own library of 'add-ons' for Photoshop CC (<https://creative.adobe.com/addons>), which includes a wide range of vector shapes. The collections come from associated partners, and while some are free, the higher-quality ones attract a small fee. There isn't a huge amount available, but there are some very intricate designs that would work perfectly for commercial design projects.



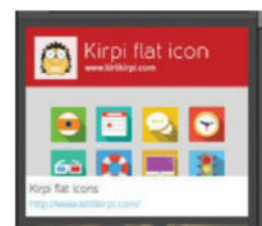
Arsenal by GoMedia

GoMedia has long offered a great range of extras through its Arsenal, and it is definitely a good place to visit for high-end designs. The pricing structure is low for the quality of work, and it does regular 'bundles' that combine popular collections into value packages. The vector shop (<https://arsenal.gomedia.us/shop/vectors>) has everything from natural textures to T-shirt designs, saving you plenty of time on creating your own assets.



Blendme.in

A slightly different offering here, in that BlendMe.in (<http://blendme.in>) is an extension for Photoshop. When installed, it sits as a panel within your workspace. It enables you to search through thousands of vector assets and import them directly into whatever you are working on without ever leaving Photoshop. It's free, as are all of the assets under a Creative Commons licence, and new collections are being added all the time.



22. TURN SIMPLE VECTORS INTO WORKABLE VECTORS

Maciej Hajnrich (better known as Valp – www.valpnow.com) describes himself as a 'graphic illusionist'. In order to create the 'magic' that makes up his artwork, he switches between Illustrator and Photoshop, playing up to the individual strengths of both programs. He explains how to follow his workflow: "First, sketch simple shapes – like a mask – with your favourite brush in Photoshop, and then drag and drop the layer (or group of layers) directly to a new document in Illustrator. Select it and go to Object>Image Trace>Make and Expand. This will turn your pixels into vectors, so now even small sketches can be scaled to any size.

"Go to Object>Path>Simplify to clean up a newly created vector path. In the Simplify window, adjust Curve Precision to about 90-95% to make it clean and to keep the original shape from the sketch.

"Now you can finish up the project in Illustrator or bring it back to Photoshop. Again, drag the vector shape from Illustrator's window to your Photoshop project; it's not necessary to save it in the meantime. You will have a new Smart Object created in Photoshop so that you can edit the original vector file at any time."



© Valp Maciej Hajnrich

23. PHOTOSHOP VEXEL TOOLS

PENI SANTOSO SHOWS US WHERE TO FIND HIS KEY TOOLS FOR VEXELLING



© Peni Santoso

© Megalomedias Designs



24. ILLUSTRATOR TO PHOTOSHOP ADVICE

Fernando Matos (who can also be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FJArtDesigns),

like many of the artists featured here uses a combination of both Adobe's Photoshop and Illustrator programs to create his vector artwork. In order to successfully integrate the two Creative Cloud companions, there are certain 'best practice' methods that help you work seamlessly between the programs. For example, Matos says: "When using the Pen tool in Adobe Illustrator, uncheck the Transform Panels (X,Y,W,H) for more control over the design you want to create. This will give you more freedom over where you want to finish an anchor point, and it will be easier to edit or post-process in Photoshop."



© Fernando Matos 2014

25. ADD SHADOWS TO VECTOR DESIGNS

"Logos and symbols created in a flat design style can have their impact and excitement boosted by adding a smooth, swooping shadow," explains graphic artist Oliver Smith. "By only selecting a few shades darker than the original shape, the shadow can subtly lift the design off of the canvas. This will properly bring it to life by adding some depth, while maintaining the curves and softness of the original shape.

"To do this, duplicate your Shape layer (Cmd/ Ctrl+J) and darken slightly, then rename as 'Shadow'. Select the Shadow layer; click on the Ellipse tool and open the drop-down menu for Path Operations to choose Subtract Front Shape. You won't be able to change the ellipse once it's placed, so utilise your rulers (Cmd/Ctrl+R) and guidelines to set yourself boundaries for the furthest reaches and drag it across your shape to form a smooth, swooping shadow."



ILLUSTRATION

CREATE A VECTOR PORTRAIT

CREATE AN 80S-STYLE VECTOR PORTRAIT USING THE PEN TOOL IN PHOTOSHOP

This tutorial will teach you how to create a clean Patrick Nagel-style portrait using only the Pen tool in Adobe Photoshop CC. If you don't have the latest version of Photoshop, don't worry! All you need is the Pen tool, time, and patience. You can follow the steps in this tutorial using any version of Illustrator as well. So what do you need to get started? A working version of Photoshop, a photo of your choice (it does not

necessarily need to be high-res), and a basic knowledge of the Pen tool. Why the Pen tool? The Pen tool is the best tool for creating clean and consistent vector lines, which we will need in order to achieve the look of Patrick Nagel's signature style. The techniques you will learn in this tutorial translate into more complicated vector illustrations. This one in particular is a great way to get you introduced to the methods of creating with vectors. Let's get started!



OUR EXPERT

CONRADO SALINAS
conradosalinas.com
@viobear

Based in Los Angeles, Conrado Salinas is a 23-year-old illustrator with a background in graphic design.

SET UP THE FILE

STRUCTURE THE LAYERS PANEL AND SET UP YOUR CANVAS

01 CHOOSE YOUR PHOTO

The goal of this tutorial is to achieve a glamorous Patrick Nagel-style illustration; keep that in mind when choosing your photo. It does not need to be high-res, but enough to distinguish body parts. Take this part of the process very seriously. Choosing the right photo can make or break the outcome of your final piece. The one used here is image ID 33324457 from www.dreamstime.com.



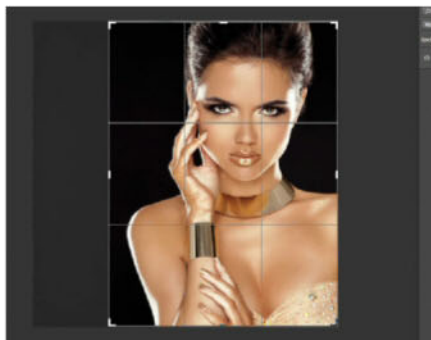
02 300 DPI WORKSTATION

You've selected your photo, now it's time to set your shop up. Go up to Image>Image Size and make sure that the resolution is set to 300. Setting your resolution to 300 dpi allows your piece flexibility when it comes to publishing online as well as printing without issues.



03 RESIZE THE CANVAS

To resize the canvas and get rid of unwanted space, go to the toolbar and select the Crop tool. Manipulate the handles to get the size you want and fix any composition issues.



WORK IN PROGRESS

FROM PHOTO TO VECTOR ILLUSTRATION



Progress 1: Choose a photo



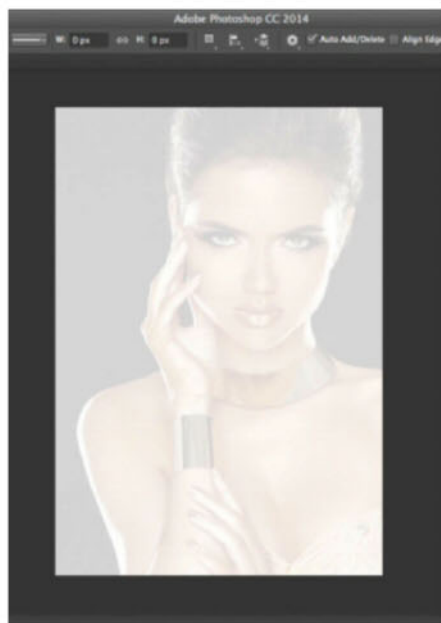
Progress 2: Draw the lineart



Progress 3: Complete with colours

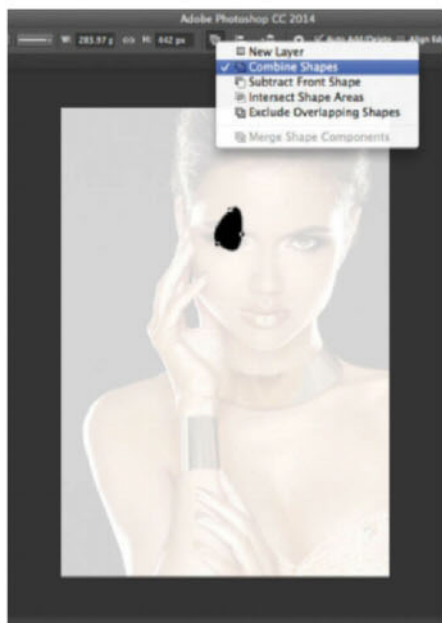
04 | WORK WITH LAYERS

Set your files up for success. To make it easier on yourself, set a line art layer that will go above everything else. This will allow you to add colours, later on, under that layer. Also, set the opacity of the photo to just enough that you're able to see it but that it doesn't get in the way. You should also set a white background layer under everything.



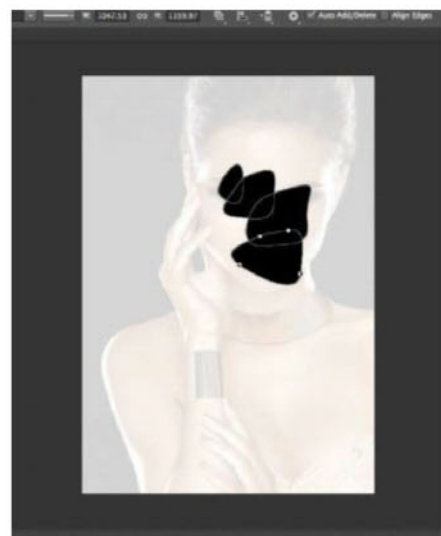
05 | PEN TOOL SETUP

You can press 'P' to activate the Pen tool, then make sure that the Pen tool is set to Shape. You can also set the Fill colour to black for now. Get familiar with the option bar at the top if you haven't already. You will be using the Combine Shapes tab a lot. It allows you to continue making shapes with the Pen tool all on one layer.



06 | COMBINE SHAPES

Here is what it looks like when you create using the Pen tool and the Combine Shapes option. You are going to take advantage of combining shapes by creating all of the line art in one layer above all other layers. You will also use Combine Shapes when you get into the colour phase. This makes your Layers panel much more condensed. So instead of having hundreds of edits translated into hundreds of layers, this feature allows your edits to be combined into one layer. In Illustrator, use the Pathfinder tool.



■ QUICK TIP

Zoom in whenever you are creating a shape and zoom out to check for weight consistency. The fastest way to zoom in is by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+Plus. To zoom out it would be Cmd/Ctrl+Minus.

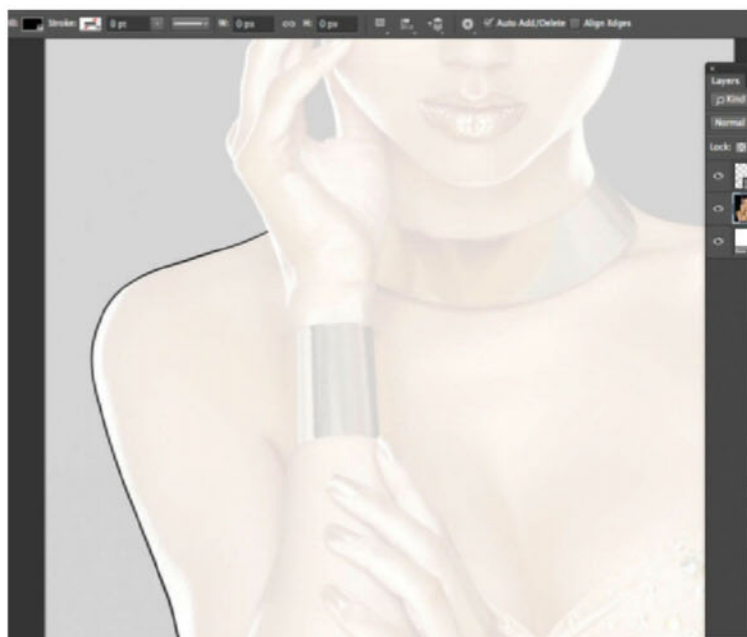
07 | LET'S GET STARTED

Pay attention to the top two shapes. For clean lines, you want to focus on an economy of points; the more points you add, the rougher it will look. The last shape, at the bottom, was made using a Stroke. STAY AWAY FROM STROKES! Look at how much more variety in width there is in the second shape in contrast to the third. Strokes make your illustrations look robotic. Much of your time should be spent manipulating the width of your shapes.



08 | THE LINE ART STAGE

Using the technique in step 7, start outlining the outside portions of the body. The line art stage is the toughest part of the illustration. To do it right, you need to constantly edit your lines and consciously think how a certain piece of skin would translate into a line as well as keeping in mind that this is a Patrick Nagel-style portrait. It's recommended that you have a reference while you work. Nagel expertly leaves out certain details to get a specific graphic look to his piece.

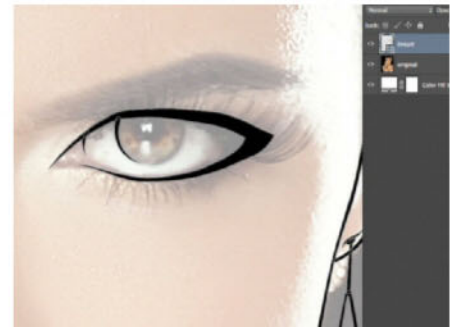


■ FINISH THE LINE ART

FOCUS ON LINE WIDTH AND CONSISTENCY

09 | REVISE AND EDIT

It's very easy to create inconsistent lines when you are zoomed in. That's why it's very important to zoom out as much as possible to see if the line you are currently making is roughly the same width as the rest of the illustration.



10 | FACIAL FEATURES

At this stage, you've finished most of the line art process. The facial features are one of the most fun parts of the illustration, but they're so easy to mess up and have the most impact, overall, in your piece. Sounds fun, right? There are many ways to tackle eyes, eyebrows and eyelashes, but we are going to do the all-in-one shortcut package that Nagel executes in his illustrations. He creates thick lines that make drawing every strand of hair unnecessary. The next step will explain it better.

“The challenge is to try and get away with the barest amount of detail while looking like a completed piece”



11 | EYES AND BROWS

Create thick shapes with maybe one or two strands of hair in the right place to get a graphic and elegant look. The more you can stay away from tiny details, the more glamorous the piece becomes. The challenge is to get away with the barest amount of detail while achieving the look of a completed piece.



12 | FINISH THE LINE ART

Getting your lines to stay consistent yet hold varying widths is not an easy task. Here is one last line art tip before heading into colours: When creating hair, make a big blob shape that takes up most of the space. Afterwards, you can edit or add to it to make it look more like strands of hair.



13 | COLOURING BOOK

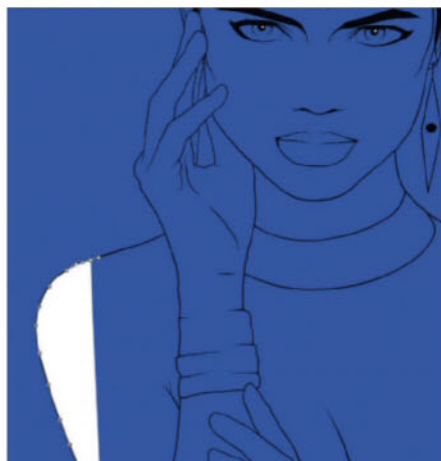
You've reached the end of the line art stage! The image in front of you should look like a colouring book page. The colouring phase sounds easier in theory, and it is to a certain extent, but choosing the right colours is oftentimes a very frustrating process. Let's get to it!

HIGHLIGHTS AND COLOURS AND SHADOWS, OH MY!

THE NEXT PHASE IS SORT OF LIKE THE WIZARD OF OZ, BUT NOT REALLY

14 COLOUR SHAPES

You're going to be creating layers below the line art and making shapes using the Pen tool. If you look at the image above, you are very quickly creating a shape, making sure you don't go over the lines, and not really worrying about how many points you're creating.



15 FLAT COLOURS

Place all the flat colours and finish the piece with shadows and a background. When adding something, make sure to keep with the Patrick Nagel style. He usually worked with geometric shapes, so keep that in mind when creating a background or foreground.



16 DON'T OVERDO IT

In order to sell the Nagel-inspired style, you need to learn how to get away with the absence of shadows. Don't mistake this for laziness: you are purposefully disregarding shadows in some areas but you are making up for it in other ways.



OTHER WORK

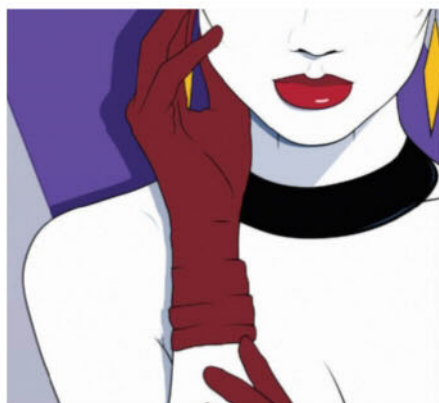
Here is a different portrait illustration I created using the same methods that you went over in this tutorial. The Pen tool can be a very frustrating tool to master. It can seem slow at times and have you questioning if it's even worth it. The Pen tool is, well... just another tool. You should know when and why to use it. I mainly choose the Pen tool when I have to create something clean and elegant. Follow me on Instagram @viobear to keep up with my latest projects. Feel free to ask questions!

QUICK TIP

It takes lots of practice to get consistent and clean lines with the Pen tool. If vector illustration is something that interests you, definitely keep at it but realise that there are also other tools and other methods of creating vector artwork. Stay busy and open-minded!

17 TO SHADOW OR NOT TO SHADOW?

That is the question. When you reach the point where you're thinking, "If I add a shadow here, then I'll have to add a shadow there, then there, then over there..." you need to stop adding shadows. What Nagel did so well is strip away all the detail until he arrived at the pure essence of the model's beauty. I'm sure Nagel had his way of arriving at that point, but all I can tell you is: trial and error!



18 FINISHED VECTOR ILLUSTRATION

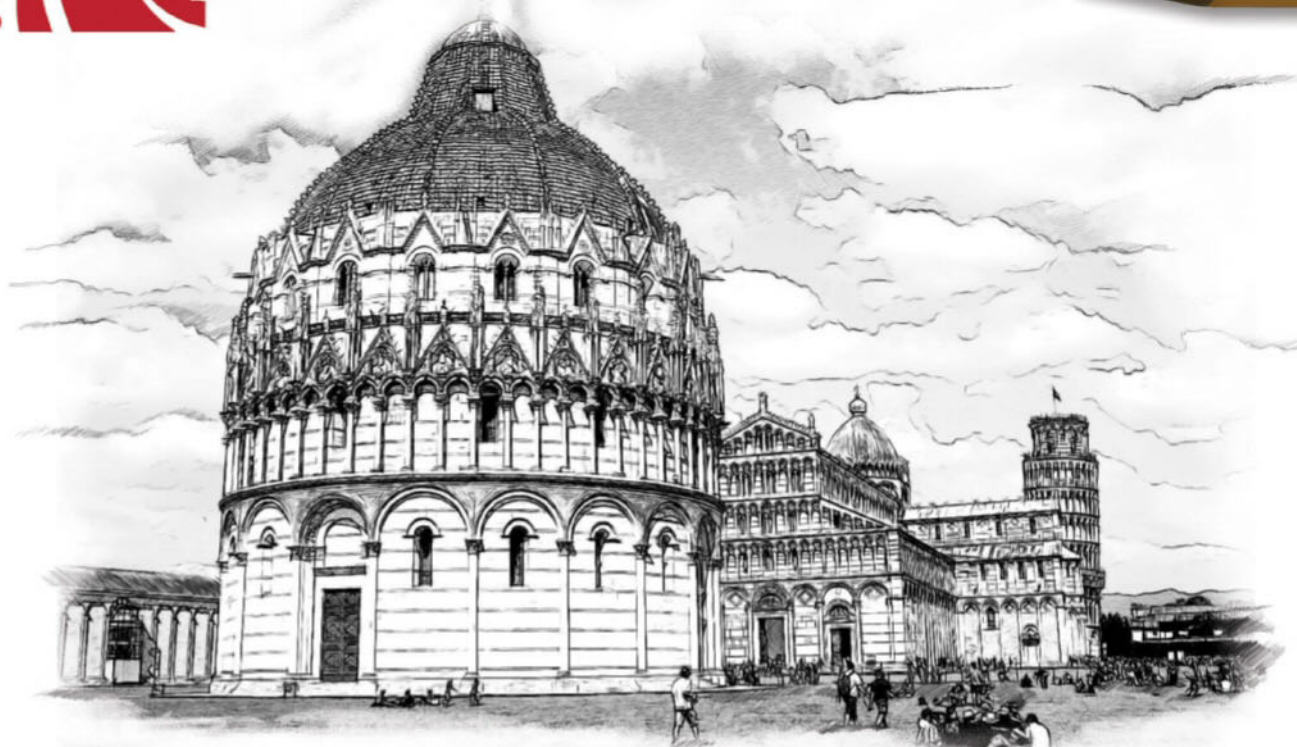
This tutorial has taught you some of the basics of vector illustration and layer preparation. You can take what you've learned and apply it to even more complex work. Just know that more detail doesn't necessarily equate to a better illustration. Be conscious of your decisions when applying any new element and always practise on improving your mechanics.





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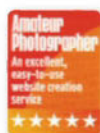
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DESIGN BETTER CHARACTERS

LEARN HOW TO DESIGN AND PAINT A SULTRY STEAMPUNK SKYCAPTAIN USING LAYERS, TEXTURES AND SELECTIONS

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls – it's time to go retro! In this tutorial, we'll venture into the beguiling world of steampunk, where the technology of the 1800s is all you need to achieve the greatest marvels of science fiction. Explore the tropes of this popular genre and learn how to use them in a fresh way, as this tutorial takes you through steampunk design step by step. We'll discover how to use a semi-realistic painting style to give your image dimension.

As with any illustration, your draftsmanship skills will come in handy here, as the focus remains firmly fixed on the specific details of character design and

illustration. Then when it is time to paint, a human-interface device – such as a Wacom Intuos tablet or Cintiq – is most definitely mandatory. The precision and pressure control that a graphics tablet can give you is essential to render a painting in this retro style.

It is Photoshop's highly effective painting tools and precise blending modes that can be fully relied on for this sort of illustration, as they will ensure professional results for every user. This simple tutorial will direct the use of layers and brush passes to build up the character, adding texture with clipping masks where necessary and controlling coverage with the Magic Wand function when needed.



OUR EXPERT

DAVID NAKAYAMA
www.davidnakayama.com
@DavidNakayama

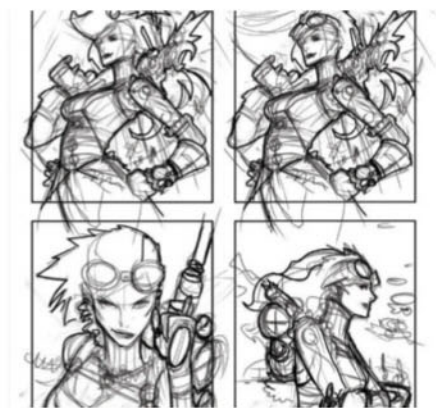
David Nakayama is a San Francisco-based illustrator and concept artist. He is the current lead artist at TinyCo and a freelancer for Marvel Comics. He enjoys working in both digitally painted and comic-book styles.

FROM SKETCH TO COLOUR FLATS

BUILD UP THE BASE OF YOUR ILLUSTRATION BEFORE TACKLING THE DETAILS

01 | CREATE THUMBNAILS

Before beginning any new illustration, it's helpful to sketch out several rough copies. Doing this on a small scale – thumbnail size, for example – is a great way to force yourself to think only about the big picture without focusing on the minor details. With this method, you'll generate a lot of different ideas quickly and have more options when it comes to picking a winner.



02 | DRAW IDEAS INTO FRAMES

Create a series of boxes with proportions to match your final image size. On a separate transparent layer, sketch up a different idea in each box – would a low-angled three-quarter view work? Perhaps a confrontational close-up? Consider which angle shows off your character the best. Decide if the background is an important part of the scene and if or how she'll interact with it.



03 | BUILD CHARACTER AND COMPOSITION

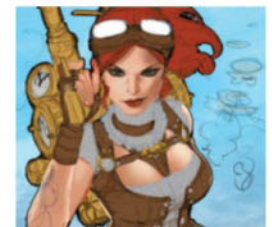
You can't talk about composition without considering character. This image shows the steampunk femme fatale as a pistol-packing, sky-captain type to convey an ultimately confident attitude. It is useful to think about the shapes of key costuming elements and accessories at this point, as large objects will affect the overall portrayal of the figure's silhouette. Aim for interesting negative space.

WORK IN PROGRESS

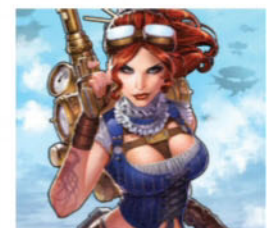
FROM THUMBNAIL TO FINISHED ILLUSTRATION



Progress 1: Design the character



Progress 2: Work out the forms



Progress 3: Render in colour



04 REFORMAT YOUR IMAGE

At this stage, look for feedback on your image. For this project, we've chosen the layout with the figure facing forward (the first two options, while interesting, didn't feel suitable). We also thought the image could be overworked a bit more. First, paste the lines of the selected thumbnail into a new document and scale it all up to full size (A4 at 300dpi) using Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T). Then use the Crop tool to expand your canvas size. Fill in what's missing on the edges.

■ QUICK TIP

It sounds counterintuitive, but did you know that the Crop tool is the ideal way to expand your canvas? Select the whole image area with Crop, then instead of pulling them inwards, drag the corner handles out to the desired larger size. Hit return to see your revised canvas size.



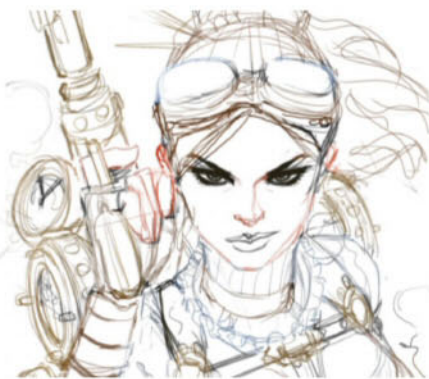
05 REFINE THE DESIGN

Now it's time to really dig into the design, and for many artists, it's more intuitive to work with lines. Lower the Opacity of the layout layer and create a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N) for the line art. Every draft costume idea set up earlier must now be fleshed out and defined clearly in detail. What exactly makes a good steampunk outfit? A good place to start is with a checklist of familiar props – things like goggles, leather straps, various belts, pinstripes, lace ruffles, brass, rivets, gauges and gears.



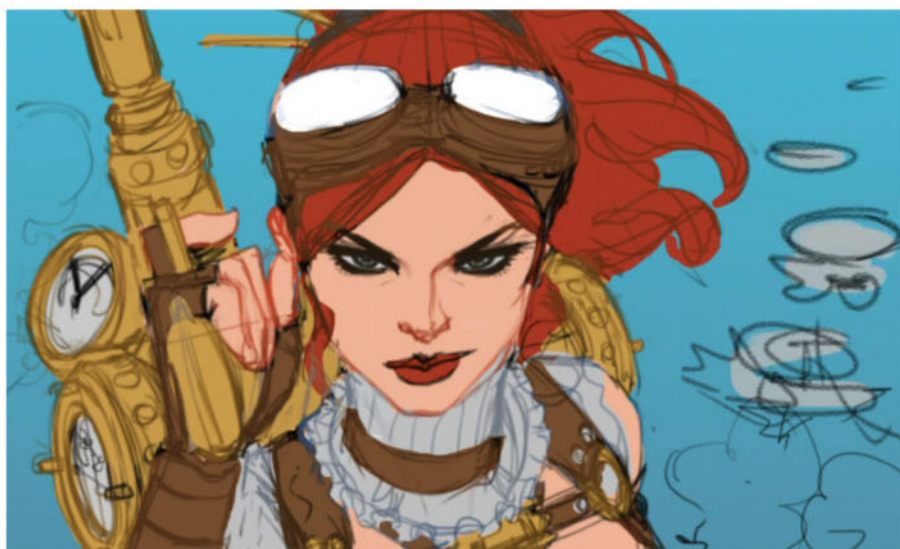
06 MIX IT UP

Don't stop there. Relying only on typical design choices will result in an uninspired and unoriginal piece. To keep things fresh, make sure to include elements that are a little outside the box. Adding a few tabs to the muzzle of the revolver evokes the look of a key, which feels right for the genre. Tattoos aren't typical in steampunk, but the one on her forearm combines an old-fashioned diving helmet with kraken tentacles – both well-known symbols in this aesthetic. Later we'll remix with the palette in a similar way.



07 PREPARE FOR COLOUR

The goal is to make the transition from black and white to fully painted colour. To begin the process, soften the hard blacks by tinting the line art. Lines describing skin become red-orange, for example, whereas leather elements are made dark brown, while white elements use a dark grey. Simply select the Lines layer, choose the Lock Transparent Pixels option at the top of the palette and then paint in the lighter colour. Leave the lines of the eyes, eyebrows and lips black so that they stand out, helping to draw the viewer's eye.



08 BUILD FLAT COLOURS

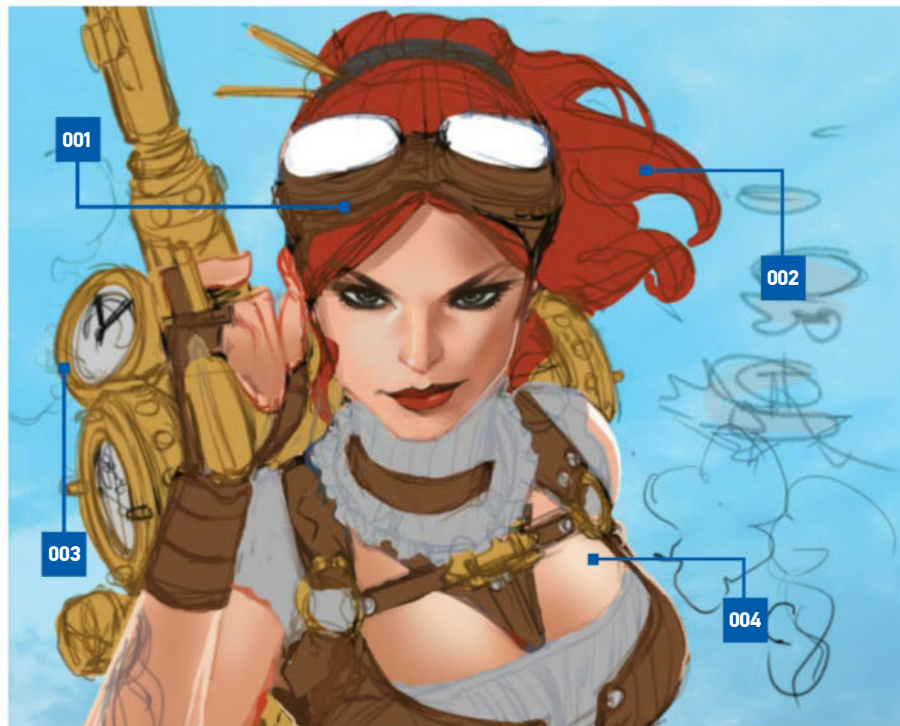
Now block in the basic colour groupings. To do this efficiently, set up your layers in the following way: below the Lines layer, create a master silhouette layer filled with grey. Using Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt and clicking the line dividing the two layers, attach an additional layer for each main colour in the piece. Paint in each colour with a flat round brush. This approach helpfully minimises the number of selections needed to divide up the form and makes it much easier to reselect any particular area of colour later.

BEGIN PAINTING

START FLESHING OUT YOUR IMAGE BY BUILDING ON THE COLOUR FLATS

09 | ADD COLOUR AND SHADING

Up to this point, the work has been strictly two-dimensional – sorting out composition, character design and flat-colour distribution. Now it's time to shift focus and start to think three-dimensionally, as the focus changes to rendering in light and shadow.



001 | STARTING OUT

Establishing a strong composition, a pose that communicates character and eye-catching costume design are generally the first priorities in any illustration

003 | POP THE FIGURE

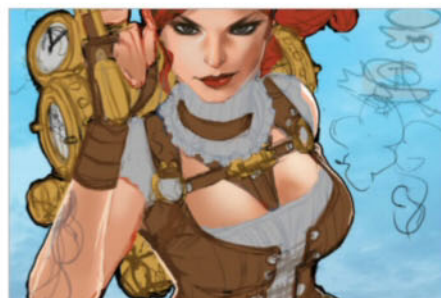
As painting begins, it's important to keep an eye on the overall image and ensure that the figure contrasts strongly with the background, as if it leaps off the screen

002 | BRIDGE TO COLOUR

With design considerations completed in black and white, adding colour is the second job, beginning with line tints and flat-colour fills

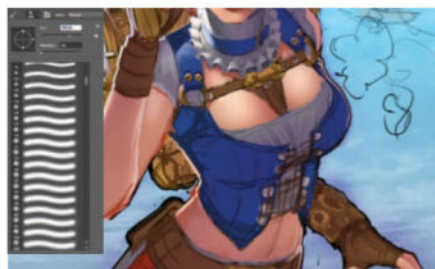
004 | SURFACE TREATMENT

The majority of time spent on this piece will go into lighting and texture passes that ultimately give this character dimension and a realistic appearance



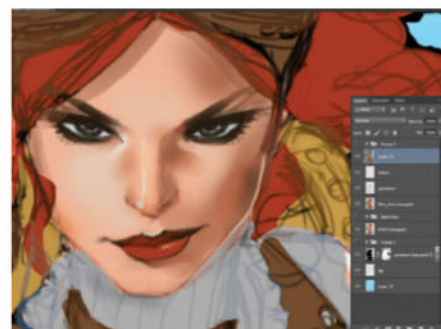
11 | FIND THE LIGHT SOURCE

The beauty of this approach is that it's easy to perform selections. The paintover exists on a separate layer too, which makes it easy to turn on and off. Doing this enables you to see if it's adding or detracting from the merged working copy. In order to choose what to put in your paintover layer, it's a good idea to let a single light source be your guide. In this case, the light is high and a little left of centre on the face, which is not consistent with the character's chest. Thankfully this can be adjusted.



12 | DEVELOP SHADOW AND TINT

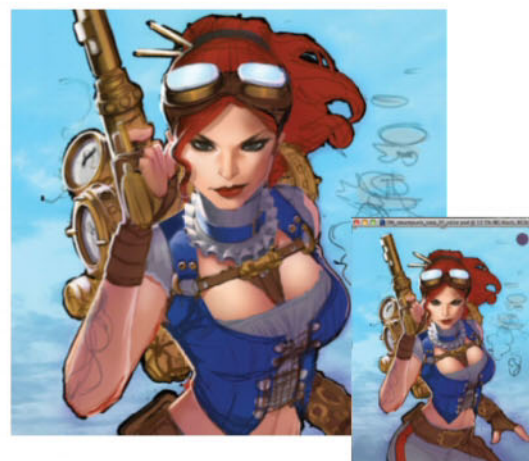
With the general lighting source established, add an overarching shadow treatment to complement it. Create two new layers at the top of your stack. In the first one, paint a master swatch using a cool colour of medium saturation – purple, in this case. Switch the second layer to Hard Light mode and use a soft round brush with the swatch colour to tint any part of the figure that belongs in shadow. Almost straight away the character will seem more complete, while bringing together the various colour groupings into a unified whole.



10 | SET UP YOUR LAYERS

Highlight the master and individual colour layers and create a merged copy of them (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+E), labelling this layer Flats. Next, merge the Flats and Lines layers together to create a copy of your complete figure so far. Clip a new layer onto this (Layer>Create Clipping Mask) and name it Paintover. As you work, use the Magic Wand tool to easily recall a colour grouping from the Flats layer. Hide the selection using Cmd/Ctrl+H if it's distracting. Then in the Paintover layer, brush in darker and lighter tones, building up from the flat-colour base.

“This makes the figure feel more finished almost right away, adds interest and brings together the various colour groupings into a unified whole”



13 | DON'T FORGET THE CONTEXT

As work progresses, it's important not to lose sight of the overall image. Consider things like the colours and if they are working, or if the anatomy and foreshortening make sense in the image. To keep an eye on the finished read of your image, it helps to have a duplicate window open on a second screen at a smaller size. Go to Window>Arrange>New>Window to do this. Once again, get some feedback. In this example, more overwork is needed on the left to help balance the figure and the blue clothing, which adds an unexpectedly nice touch.

DETAILS THE CHARACTER

CONCLUDE YOUR PIECE WITH DETAILED RENDERING

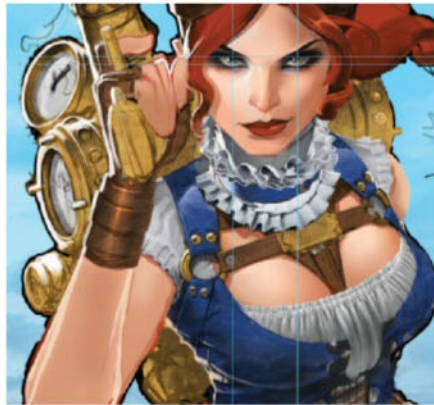
14 | CONTROL THE FOCUS

Rendering every part of a figure in high detail is both unrealistic in terms of time, but also self-defeating. Your illustration will actually be a lot stronger if detail is concentrated in one place – usually the upper body and face in particular, as this helps to guide the viewer's focus. Work with the shadows turned off for now and gather photo reference to help you get the face, hair and accessory details just right. Pay particular attention to the eyes, making sure that they are conveying the desired expression.



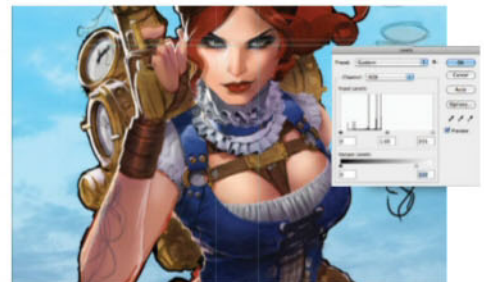
15 | BUILD TEXTURE

So far, all the various surfaces are similar. Lighting alone isn't enough to differentiate them and to read realistically, each surface will need a distinctive texture. This can be done with brushes or texture overlays, but generally the second approach is faster. Visit royalty-free texture websites, such as www.cgtextures.com, to gather aged leather, linen and worn metal texture assets to suit this image. When painting is complete, stamp all the figure layers together and clip the new texture layers to it (Layer>Create Clipping Mask).



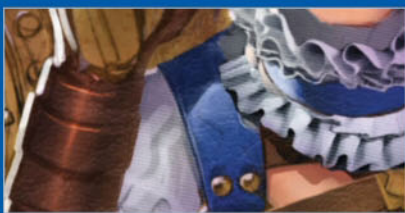
16 | WORK WITH TEXTURES

None of these layers work automatically, so adjust each one until it fits in a natural-looking way. Dial up the Levels to increase contrast (Cmd/Ctrl+L opens the adjustment window). Then change each layer's mode to Overlay, Soft Light or Hard Light and lower the Opacity until it looks right. Adjust the scale of each texture with Transform (Cmd/Ctrl+T) until it seems proportional. When things look correct, use the Clone Stamp tool to alter particular areas where the texture appears too strong or too weak.



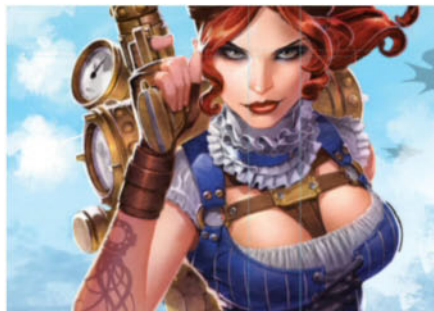
■ QUICK TIP

The more realistic your painted style, the more you'll need to collect reference. It's almost impossible to paint detailed realism from memory alone, so spend the time to gather images of difficult details like ruffles and other clothing folds, faces and hair. If it is possible, have your reference open on a second screen as you work.



■ GATHER TEXTURE ASSETS

A little more on the topic of texture overlays. When searching for royalty-free textures online, dedicated sites like www.cgtextures.com or www.mayang.com/textures are an invaluable way to gather handy assets for your texture library. In general, try to download the largest version of a given texture that you can to reduce the amount of Clone Stamping you'll have to do later. When a certain texture isn't easily available, you may want to try a texture-brush approach instead. Tutorials about rendering various materials with brushes are readily available online with a simple search. www.gumroad.com is another great place to find useful tutorials.

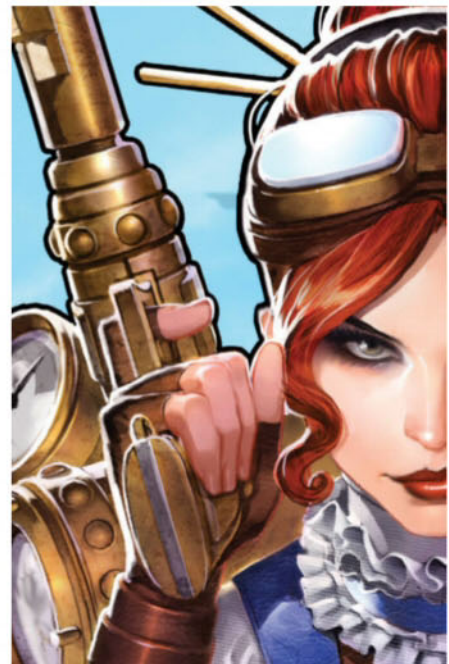



17 | INCLUDE FINISHING TOUCHES

Now the fun part – it's finally time to add the bells and whistles to make this image sing. Add fine details like the pinstripes and individual strands of hair. Add tattoos on a new layer set to Multiply mode at 66% Opacity. In the background, add some airship silhouettes. As they recede in space, increase the blur (Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur) and the amount of blue to simulate the appearance of atmospheric fog. Finally, it wouldn't be steampunk without some steam! Add a few puffs around the figure's brass backpack using a cloud texture brush.

18 | A FINAL FLOURISH

One last thing – adding a bold stroke around a painted figure is a cool, eye-catching juxtaposition of styles and it also helps the figure pop off the page. To get a decent rough draft, stamp all the figure layers together and double-click the merged layer to access the Layer Style options. Choose Stroke and set it around 10px. Place this layer behind the original figure layers. Now add the stroked layer to a Group (Cmd/Ctrl+G), then flatten (Cmd/Ctrl+E) to get a nice clean layer with the effect added in. Clean up the edges for a nice, even outline.





Down to brass tacks: Victorian materials are a key touchstone of steampunk and brass is a particular favourite. Its opulent golden colour adds richness to illustrations that are often in a limited palette, while its universality in the Victorian era makes any object rendered in brass look instantly 19th Century. The physical properties of brass mean that it can be used as a texture for almost any imaginary object you like, such as this gun.

Inspired by practicality: Advances in Victorian technology meant that those who travelled in new inventions like cars often needed to protect their eyes from wind and dust. Steampunk's love of reimagining Victorian technology as more powerful and more advanced than it actually was means that goggles have become a must-have accessory for any steampunk character as they speed off on their adventures.

Properly kitted out: A key component of steampunk is the clothing. It takes inspiration from both Victorian fashion and more practical clothing from the time, such as army uniforms or stereotypical ensembles like the classic explorer outfit of pith helmets and puttees. This is clothing designed for travel, but limited by Victorian tailoring. Zips and poppers are out, but straps, rivets and carabiners are in!

Taking to the skies: Imagining that Victorian technology went further than it actually did rapidly gave rise to the steampunk motif of the airship. These are not merely hot air balloons or zeppelins though – they're ships built along classic Victorian lines that have been enhanced with Jules Verne-inspired sci-fi technology. Adding them into your piece is a quick and obvious shorthand for steampunk.

Add your own spin: Don't get bogged down by obvious steampunk symbols like clockwork. This character's tattoo isn't typical of steampunk in itself, but the mix of the old-fashioned diving helmet and oversized octopus in the design clearly references classic Victorian sci-fi, like *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea*. Try to add to the canon with notes like this rather than simply reproducing the same old symbols.

Realistic rendering: Steampunk can be produced in any art style, but the most common is realistically rendered digital paintings that emulate the oil paintings of the time. Don't feel limited by this though. As long as you're hitting other steampunk signifiers, you can introduce more modern elements, such as the comics-inspired black outline here to freshen up the style without detracting from its main elements.

SECRETS OF STEAMPUNK

LIKE OTHER ICONIC STYLES, STEAMPUNK HAS A VISUAL LANGUAGE OF ELEMENTS THAT MARK IT OUT. FIND OUT WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW THEY'RE CREATED



© Ashley Guyot

“These tools have revolutionised the way I paint in Photoshop. I’m almost embarrassed to admit that I never understood their value until now”





GEISHA

ASHLEY GUYOT

FIND OUT HOW OUR ARTIST COMBINED THE PAINTING POWER OF PHOTOSHOP CC AND COREL PAINTER

Lead designer and freelance artist Ashley Guyot (www.behance.net/ashguyot) created this digital painting using Photoshop CC and Corel Painter 13. Called *Geisha*, it is the first in a new series designed by Guyot: "It takes place in an apocalyptic world in which the denizens are simultaneously disintegrating and evolving; the characters and stories that populate the world develop and become clearer in my mind with each new piece. For this painting, I wanted to juxtapose antiquity with a dark (but hopeful) vision of the future."

The image was built up using brushes from deviantART (brushes by fox-orian, Kecky and Soenanda had the heaviest rotation) and a public domain reference photo. Guyot also utilised other tools, including "two simple tools that in my many years of loving Photoshop I had never used before: Lock Transparent Pixels and layer masks. These tools have revolutionised the way I paint in Photoshop. I'm almost embarrassed to admit that I never understood their value until now."



01 INITIAL SKETCH

I started by doing a monochromatic value sketch of the composition, making sure it was very close to what the final image would look like.

02 ADD IN COLOUR

I duplicated the value sketch layer, locked the transparent pixels (magic!), and added some colour to the values. I wanted to give her a rusty, patinated vibe.

03 DEEPER SHADES

I added a layer under the value layer and painted in some colours for her skin and kimono, while adding deeper shades to the value sketch.



04 | SWITCHING PROGRAMS

Jumping back and forth between Photoshop and Painter, I refined the painting a bit more, blending and adding colours and detail.



05 | REFERENCE PHOTO

I chose another reference photo to add some visual interest to the background, enlarging and blurring it until it was only indistinct light and dark shapes. I painted it in using a layer mask.



06 | BLENDED BACKGROUND

I went back into Corel Painter and blended the background further to give it a more painted look.



07 | TEXTURE PLAY

I played with the background a bit more until I was satisfied, then used a layer mask and blending modes to add texture to the model's kimono and gas mask.



08 | FINAL DETAILS

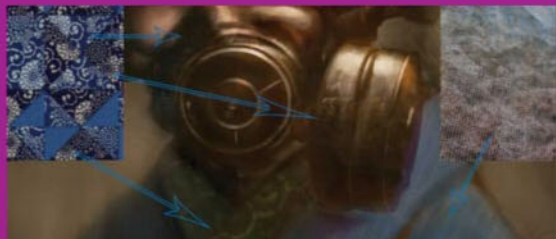
At this stage, I added the final details to the artwork and the digital painting was done.



PATTERN AND TEXTURE

GUYOT EXPLAINS HOW TO ADD PATTERNS TO YOUR PAINTINGS

Experimenting with pattern and texture can be a quick way to add interest to your work (even if it is subtle), particularly if you can integrate it in an unexpected area (the floral origami pattern on the gas mask, for example). You can really 'weld' it to your painting by adding highlights and shadows.



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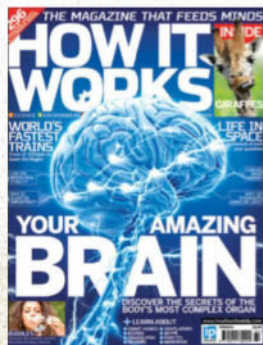
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CREATE A STAINED GLASS EFFECT

USE COLOURING TECHNIQUES AND BLENDING MODES TO MIMIC STREAMING LIGHT

Stained glass is a beautiful art form that has graced the windows of many important buildings throughout history. It is the art of light and colour, and was originally used as a way to convey ideas and stories in a time when most people were illiterate. But visual storytelling was beloved and widely understood.

As time passed, stained glass art took on new meaning and life, but remained equally beautiful and appreciated. In this tutorial, you will learn how to

digitally re-create the illusion of glass and light in Photoshop. Before diving right in, it is important to know and understand the art form that you will be trying to mimic. Take some time to research stained glass and the way it is made. Find some reference material and begin thinking about the illustration you want to put into glass. As you look for reference material, notice the shapes and forms created by the glass and the way that the light affects it. Once you have done a bit of research, it is time to begin.



OUR EXPERT

MORGHAN GILL
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Gill is a professional 2D artist who has been working in the videogame and animation industry for three years.

■ PREPARING THE BASE

IMPORT THE RENDER PASSES AND CUT OUT THE PLANES

01 | CREATE THUMBNAILS

Before you begin, it is a good idea to look up stained glass work as a point of reference. After establishing your reference and becoming familiar with the overall look and composition style, create a new document. From the menu bar go to Layer>New>Layer and draw out several thumbnail sketches to explore your composition.



02 | BUILD UP YOUR SKETCH

Select and copy your thumbnail. Create a new layer and paste your thumbnail on the new layer. Using Edit>Transform>Scale, scale your sketch to fill your canvas. Then set the layer Opacity to 50%. This sketch will now act as a rough guide as you move forward to a more detailed sketch.



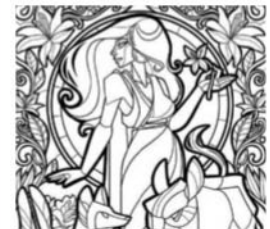
03 | CREATE THE ROAD MAP

With your thumbnail sketch in place, create a new layer on top to begin outlining a more detailed drawing. This is the time to make sure your composition is working well and that your subject or figures are fully fleshed out. At this phase the line work can still be rough if desired.

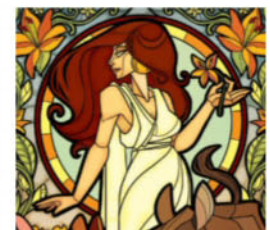


■ WORK IN PROGRESS

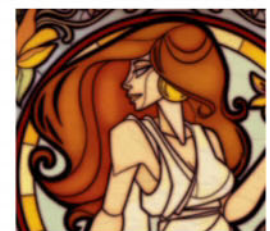
FROM START TO FINISH



Progress 1: Create the linework



Progress 2: Lay in your colours



Progress 3: Create the illusion of glass

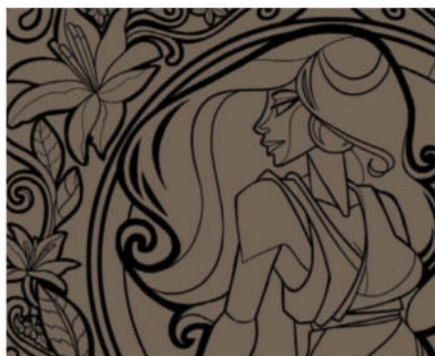
04 | BEGIN THE LINE WORK

Create a new layer. With a hard brush, begin laying down solid, clean lines. Set your background layer to a neutral colour that suits you (like grey). Stained glass work typically uses a very graphic or geometric shape language, so keep this in mind as you begin to tie down your forms. While some large shapes are good to have, it is also a good idea to break down those shapes into smaller chunks. When creating those smaller elements, try to have those new shapes help define the form.



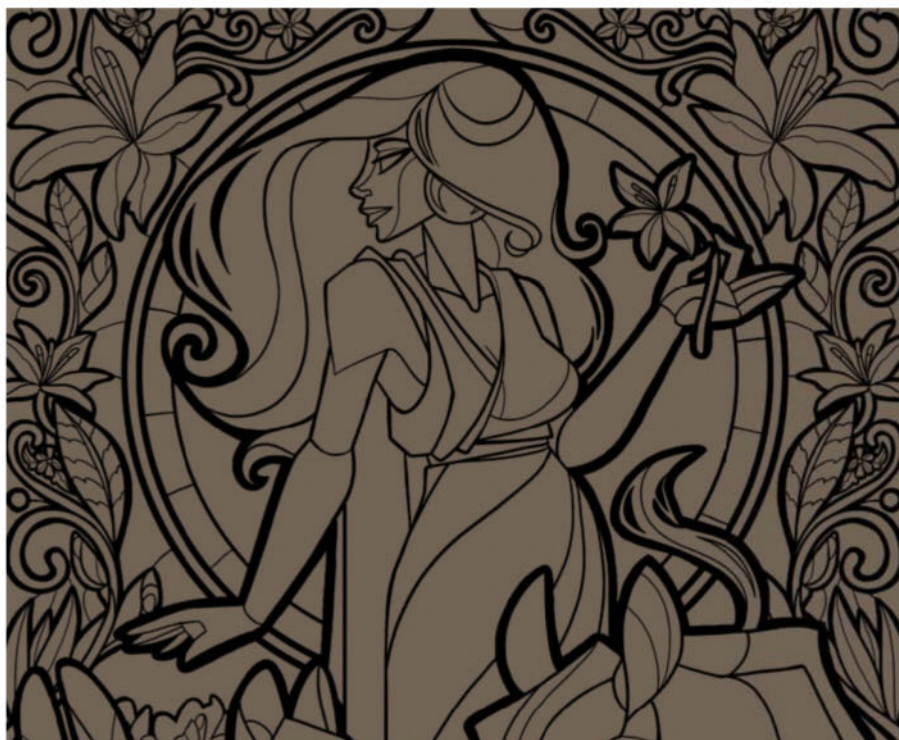
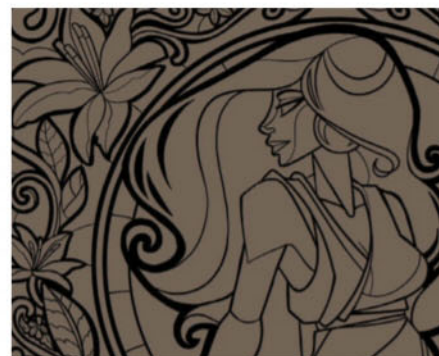
05 | LINE QUALITY AND WEIGHT

Zoom in and work close to your lines. This will help keep the lines from getting jittery, remaining clean and free of mistakes as you work. Line weight is also important to consider. The lines inside a figure or form, those used to define folds, shadows, seams, and the like, should be thinner than the lines used around a figure. Creating a thicker line around a figure will bring the subject forward and help keep everything within those lines reading as a cohesive whole.



06 | BRING EVERYTHING TOGETHER

In traditional stained glass, every piece of glass is soldered together, so your lines must also reflect those connections. After you have inked all of your figures, there are sections of the composition that will need to be tied together by creating these thin lines. For this illustration, the sky and circle are large areas of free-floating shapes. Break down those shapes into smaller ones where needed to make sense for your illustration. These smaller sections will also allow for more colour variety later on.



07 | FINAL LINE WORK

As you finish your line work, zoom out to make sure that everything is reading clearly. While it is nice to have lots of detail, you also want to have larger areas of rest. This is important for your main figures because they should be easily recognised and pop off the background. If there are any issues, now is the time to make those fixes. If everything is readable and clean then it is time to move on to the colouring stage.

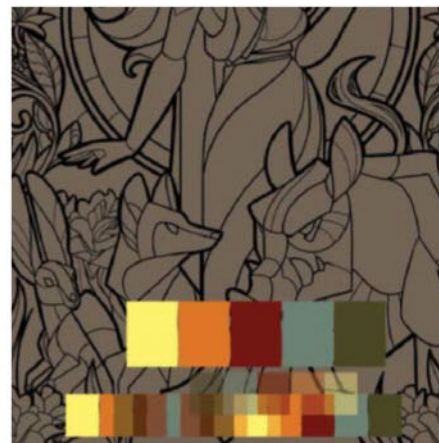


■ QUICK TIP

You can quickly explore colours by creating swatches and duplicating them out on new layers. Then adjust those layers' opacities and location in order to see a wider range of colours that work together. Try layers at 20, 50, and 75% Opacity and move around your colour combinations.

08 | CHOOSE YOUR COLOURS

Generally, it is a good idea to keep your colour palette small; anywhere from three to five colours. This illustration uses five basic colours. However, by simply taking two colours and finding the values and hues between them, you can get a wide range of colour variety while maintaining an overall colour scheme. For example, while orange is already one of the main colours chosen, you can get a different shade of orange by taking the red and colouring over it with the yellow that is at 50% Opacity.



FINDING THE COLOURS

CHOOSING A COLOUR THEME AND DIRECTION

09 | ADD A BASE COLOUR

Create a new layer under your line work layer. This will be your colour layer. Select a base colour that works for your illustration and fill the layer using the Paint Bucket tool. You can also add a gradient to add some variation as you begin to paint on top.



001 | FINDING THE COMPOSITION
Finding a balanced composition and appropriate style is key, and the foundation to any good illustration

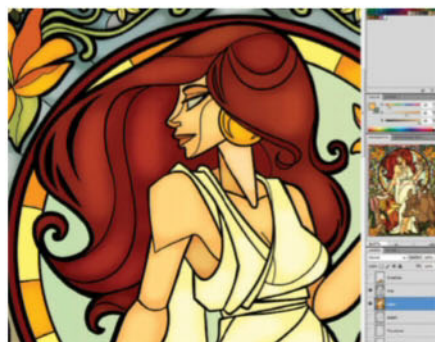
002 | MAKING YOUR MARK
Clean line work and strategic line weight can help pull the figures together and keep them from getting lost

003 | MOVING FORWARD
Next is to lay down the colours and to move towards giving off the feeling of light



11 | FINISH THE FLAT COLOURS

During most of the colouring stage, you can treat your illustration like a colouring book, painting under your line layer until most of the composition is filled in with flat colours. Now is a good point to stop and make sure that you are satisfied with the colours you have chosen. Keep in mind that as you progress, certain layer effects will begin to alter the colours of your work. Later on, there will be another opportunity to adjust the colours as a whole once the final illustration is nearly complete.



12 | ADD THE ILLUSION OF LIGHT

With the final colours done, find a soft, round brush. Using the Eyedropper tool, select colours from your illustration. Go back in and focus on large areas such as the hair. Find a lighter colour and lightly touch the centre of the piece. This will help give the feeling that light is filtering through the centre. Choose hotter, bright colours for this task. You can lower the opacity on your brush if it helps you build up an interesting texture. This can be done on a separate layer if desired.



10 | VARIATION IN VALUE

Adding variation to similar neighbouring colours will help give a nice feel to your illustration. While it is not always necessary (such as the robe on the female figure) it can really help for other larger areas such as the sky. Blues that are very similar but may be slightly darker or more saturated than the ones next to them helps sell the illusion of arranged glass. If a stained glass artist were using blue glass shards, not all blues would have turned out the same during the glass-making process.

“Adding variation to similar neighbouring colours will help give a nice feel to your illustration”



13 | SOFT LIGHT

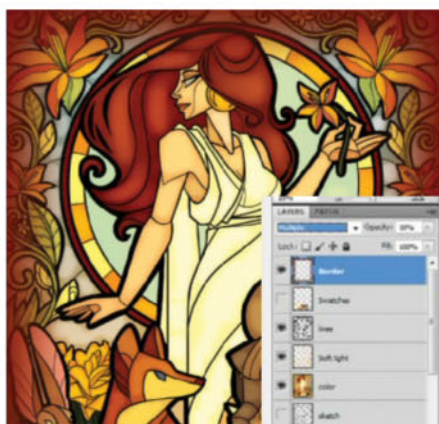
Create a new layer above your colour layer. In the Layers window, set the blending mode of this new layer to Soft Light and lower the Opacity as needed. Just like in the previous step, find a soft, round brush and select a warm colour. Go back through and hit the centre areas once again. This gives them just a bit more warmth and a glow from their cores. Doing this again on another layer adds more variation in texture and allows you to make edits and adjustments as needed for your particular illustration.

CREATING THE ILLUSION

GIVING YOUR ILLUSTRATION THE FEELING OF LIGHT

14 | ADD A GRADIENT

Create a new layer above your line work layer. Using the Gradient tool, select a dark colour that complements the colours in your illustration, but try to avoid black. For this illustration, a dark red is selected. Use the Linear Gradient option and create a gradient from one border in towards the centre of the canvas. The gradient should not extend too far (here it's only about one inch). Repeat on all four sides. In the Layers window, set this layer to Multiply and drop the Opacity to 30%.



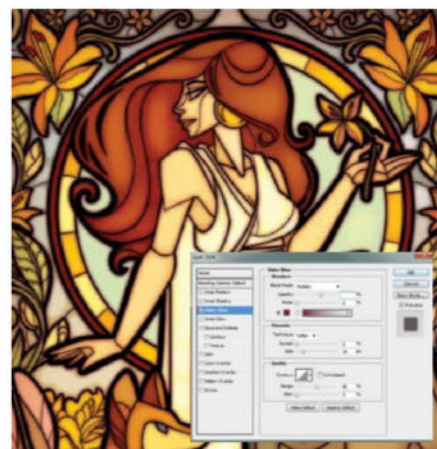
15 | KEEP IT WARM

Above your colour layer, create a new layer, change the blending mode to an Overlay layer and adjust Opacity as needed (for this piece it is set to 20%). Grab a light yellow colour and fill the layer using the Paint Bucket tool. Because this illustration is warm, it is important to keep all the colours (even the cool ones) warm. This overlay keeps things hot and maintains colour harmony. Don't worry if it is looking too warm though; it will be brought down to a cooler temperature later.



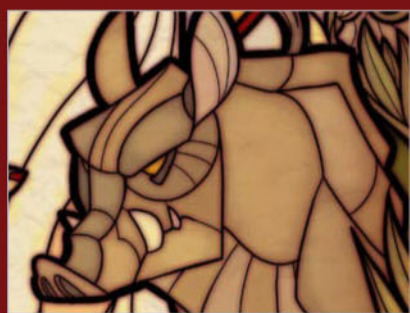
16 | LINE EFFECTS

Select your line work layer, navigate to Layer>Layer Style>Outer Glow. In the Layer Style window, change the blend mode to Multiply with the Opacity at 60-75%. Select a dark colour, but again try to avoid black. This layer style will give the illusion that less light is hitting near the line work and will help sell the stained glass effect. Play around with the Spread and Size until you find something that works well and does not make everything feel overly dark.



QUICK TIP

To quickly adjust a layer's hue and saturation, use the hotkey Cmd/Ctrl+U. Learning hotkeys can significantly speed up your workflow. There are many hotkeys in Photoshop and lists for both Windows and Mac can easily be found online.



APPROACH TEXTURES WITH CARE

Textures can really help pull a piece together, but should also be used sparingly. For the stained glass effect, a minor ripple texture helps sell the feel. Other types of textures that work well are water ripples, wall stucco, crinkled paper, and water droplets. There are many places online to get free textures for your work. Be aware, though, that too much photo texturing can take away from the quality of your work. It should enhance the piece, not compete with it.

17 | PLAY WITH CURVES

After all of the layer effects and shadow treatments, your illustration will likely be looking rather dark. Select your colour layer and the soft light layer. Go to Layer>Merge Layers to combine the two into one merged colour layer (before merging, you can create duplicate layers just in case). Select this new colour layer and go to Image>Adjustments>Curves. Within the Curves window, play with and adjust the colours as needed. The goal is to brighten the image, keeping the feeling of light coming through without blowing the colours out.



18 | THE FINAL TOUCH

Last but not least, add a texture overlay. Find a large texture online (CGTextures.com is a great place for royalty-free material). Crumpled paper textures work very well for stained glass. Import your desired texture as a new layer above your colours. Go to Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation. Select Colorize and create a light pink colour pattern (or play with the hue until you find a colour that works best). With the texture layer selected, reduce the Opacity to 60% and set the layer blending mode to Overlay.



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JONAH ALEX ARIZMENDI

DISCOVER HOW ONE ARTIST USED THE POWER OF PHOTOSHOP CC AND MANGA STUDIO TO CREATE THIS SUBTLY TONED ILLUSTRATION

A director and illustrator Alex Arizmendi (<http://www.mfk00.com>) was initially inspired by a photo that he saw on Instagram, of a girl taking a selfie. He thought, 'Wouldn't it be cool if this girl had tentacles instead of hands?', and the concept grew from there.

The illustration was created using Photoshop CC and Manga Studio by Smith Micro (<http://manga.smithmicro.com>), and was built up in three key stages: drawing, digital inking and colouring.

"For me, drawing is the base of all my illustrations, so I spend a lot of time at this stage,"

says Arizmendi. "I used a lot of layers to try different elements and composition ideas. That is why I use Photoshop instead of other [programs] that work too much like drawing on paper; with Photoshop, every mistake can be fixed without going backwards and starting again."

“Drawing is the base of all my illustrations, so I spend a lot of time at this stage building the image just the way I want it”



01 INITIAL DRAWING

First, I work out my drawing until I'm satisfied with the overall composition and design. I end up with a layer with the final drawing on. You can see this on my Vimeo channel (<http://vimeo.com/97875256>).



02 MANGA STUDIO

I take my drawing file and open it in Manga Studio. I've tried [digital inking] in Photoshop, but I just haven't found the correct settings and custom brushes to get the lines I like.



03 BACK TO PHOTOSHOP

I now go back into Adobe Photoshop CC. Underneath my new digital inking layer, I'll create another layer for the colour base, which I will start to build up next.

04 | SHADOW LAYER
I duplicate that layer and turn it into a shadow layer. I just need to play with the image adjustments to make those colours darker. Normally I start with Hue/Saturation.



07 | LAYER ORGANISATION
I have a basic layer organisation of four layers: FX, digital ink, shadow and colour base. I add more depending on the complexity of each illustration. Here I added layers for clouds, her shirt and her tattoos.



05 | MASK IN SHADOWS
Once I'm happy with the darker palette, I create a Channel Mask to paint out the values I need. Here I can use any kind of brushes, erasers or textures etc.



08 | FINAL FILTERS
Once I have everything just the way I want it, I put some filters on the image to make it a little bit organic. In this case, I used the Noise and Texture filters.



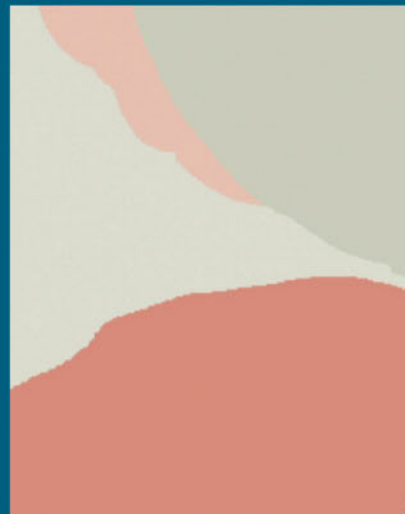
06 | SPECIAL EFFECTS
I create a new layer over the ink layer. This is my FX layer, where I'll put some details like reflections, highlights, and all the shiny stuff to make my illustration pop.



PRECISE COLOURING

ALEX SHARES HIS TIPS FOR ADDING A COLOUR BASE

To create the colour base layer, I use the Pencil tool or the Lasso tool without Anti-alias in order to get pixel-clean cutouts. That way, when I'm working on the shadow values, I can make selections or change colours without leaving trashy pixels on my way through.



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OUR EXPERT

ABI DAKER
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[@abigaildaker](https://twitter.com/abigaildaker)

Abi Daker is a British illustrator who lives and works in Cyprus. She specialises in creating map and cityscape illustrations.

SOURCE FILES

A linear street map and several of the illustrated elements used in this tutorial are included on FileSilo to help with re-creating a similar piece.

DESIGN A MAP

DISCOVER HOW TO DESIGN AND LAY OUT A MAP THAT ILLUSTRATES SOME OF THE UNIQUE QUALITIES OF LONDON

The inspiration behind this piece is the popular *Wonderground Map* image by Max Gill, which incorporates witty text and tiny illustrated elements within a map of London. Over the course of this tutorial we'll learn how to use Photoshop to compose a piece that incorporates both images and text creatively. It's important to research the area that will be

drawn before starting an illustrated map. This helps decide which parts of the city to focus on in order to make a composition that is both engaging and informative. For a piece like this, the best method is to start with a strong structure – a basic road map of the city – and to add the details as you go along until you have a more developed piece. Photoshop is a great tool for composing a complicated map like this.

The different elements are simple to move around and rearrange, and it is easy to achieve flat, bold colours to complement the detailed composition.

The tutorial will also demonstrate how to keep an increasingly complicated document organised and easy to work with. The final steps in the piece will show how to add a few textured elements to emulate the antique style of the inspiration piece.



WORK IN PROGRESS FROM LINEWORK TO FINISHED MAP



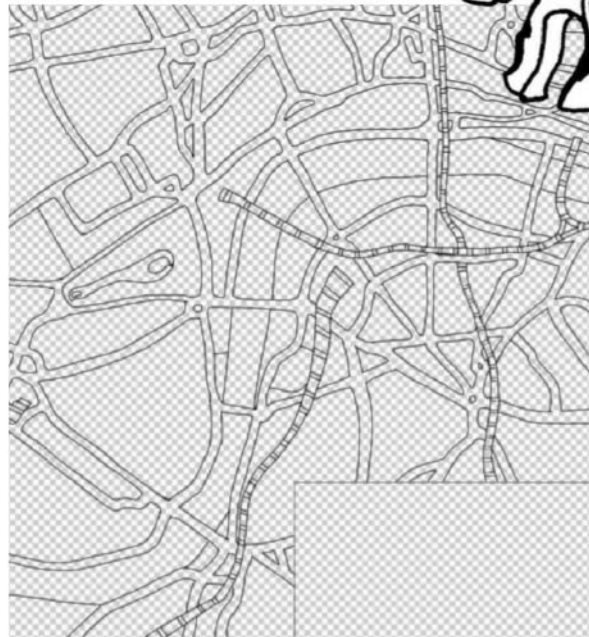
Progress 1: Add structure



Progress 2: Include elements



Progress 3: Final artwork



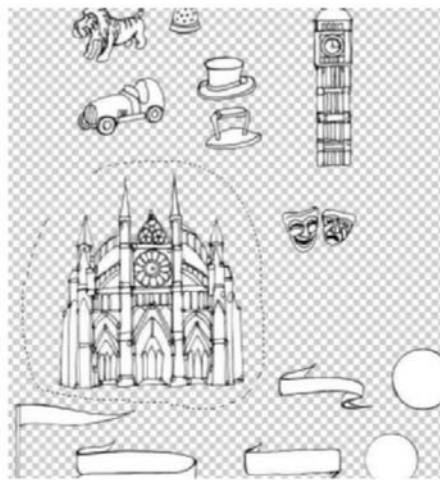
01 BUILD THE STRUCTURE

Start with a linear street map of the area to be represented – there is an example provided on FileSilo that can be used to get started. The line drawing should be a fairly simple map of the most important roads in the area with spaces to add detail later. Open the document, select the layer with the line work and go to Layer>Duplicate Layer. It's a good idea to keep a version of the line work in the document so it can be edited easily if needed.

02 ADD COLOUR

Select the Paint Bucket tool, make sure Anti-Alias and Contiguous are checked, and start filling the map with colour. This is the foundation of the piece, so the colours should be fairly muted and similar in tone. Maps are complicated images and can easily become too busy and difficult to read, so a restrained palette will help to stop the piece becoming confusing. When the map is coloured, go to Layer>Layer Style>Pattern Overlay and select the washed watercolour texture. Set the Opacity of the layer style to something like 25%.

“The line drawing should be a fairly simple map of the most important roads in the area, with space to add details”



03 START TO ADD DETAIL

There are several hand-drawn elements provided that can be used within this map, but to create something similar, scan inked artwork at a high resolution – 300dpi or above – then go to Image>Mode>Grayscale followed by Image>Adjustments>Levels, and adjust the input levels to sharpen the linework. Then take the Magic Eraser tool, check the Contiguous setting and delete the background of the images. Select the element you want to work with using the Lasso tool, then copy and paste it into the map document.

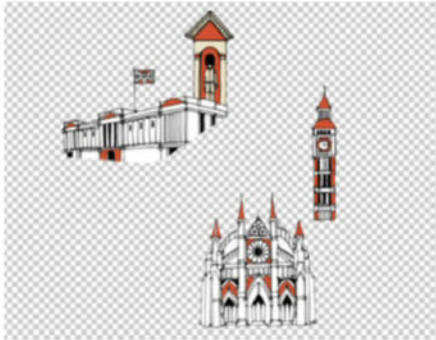


04 COMPOSE THE MAP

Arrange the detailed elements on the map to compose the piece. The linear layer that was retained in step 1 can help with cropping the illustrations to fit into the street map. Drag the linear layer to the top so that the street boundaries are visible over the illustrated element and use the Polygonal Lasso tool to select the part of the illustration to be removed. The next step is to go to Edit>Clear. This will help the hand-drawn elements appear to sit naturally in the street map.

■ QUICK TIP

Keep the layers organised – once elements are added to the map, it can become quite complicated. Make sure that the various elements are organised in folders to make workflow easier. This also helps to keep layer styles consistent across all the elements, as you can apply the layer style to the respective folders.



05 COLOUR THE ILLUSTRATED ELEMENTS

Select the Paint Bucket tool and check Contiguous and Anti-Alias. Select a colour to highlight the details on the illustrated elements and fill a few little detailed sections. Again, be fairly restrained with this. Then uncheck Contiguous, choose a neutral shade and fill in the rest of each illustration. Keep the illustrated elements on separate layers in a labelled folder. This is important; this map will consist of hundreds of layers, so labelled folders can save a lot of time and confusion further on in the piece.



06 ADD GENERIC ELEMENTS

This stage is the most fun, as the map starts to come together and looks far more exciting. There are some banners, trees and buildings provided on FileSilo that are enough to make a complete composition. Place the banners on areas that need text and add generic buildings to balance out the more detailed areas. It's best to have two or three banners and several different buildings that can be repeated throughout the piece. Go to Layer>Duplicate Layer to copy the different elements from existing layers.



08 DETAIL THE MAP FURTHER

Max Gill's work is full of fascinating and odd little details that often go unnoticed on a first viewing. On FileSilo there are some illustrations provided of some of the Monopoly pieces that are scattered around the example map. Not everyone would necessarily pick up on this reference initially, and so it adds something for the viewer to discover at a later time. Small details like this work best when they refer to a popular feature of the city that the illustration is based on.

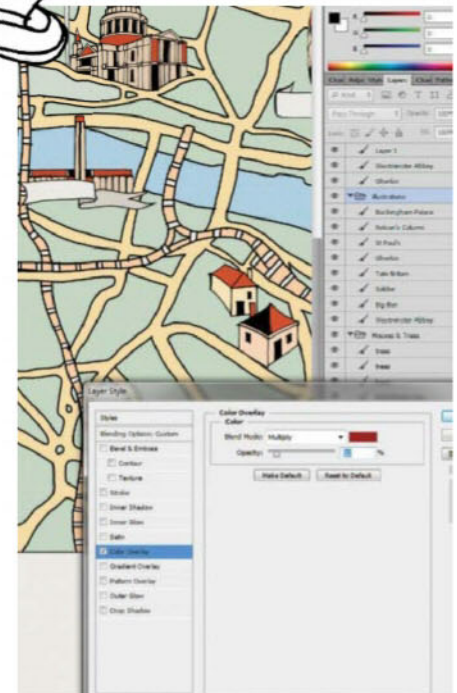
09 LABEL SPECIFIC AREAS

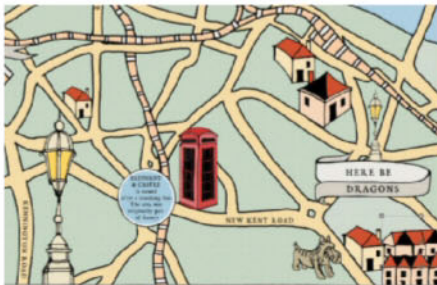
This is when research into the city becomes useful. For an illustrated map like this, the piece is not intended to be a literal reference to the city, so the labels can contain small jokes or clues. In this example, the map has been labelled according to the stereotypes held about the individuals that commonly occupy each part of the town. A font with imperfections in the design will often complement the hand-drawn elements well, but it is always best to try out a couple of different styles.



07 SET THE LAYER STYLES

This is a good stage to try out some colour adjustments and textures. Select the folder for each set of elements and Layer>Layer Style>Colour Overlay to adjust the colour and Layer>Layer Style>Pattern Overlay to adjust the texture. Try different combinations of textures and colours to see what works. Paper textures and sepia or grey tones are usually best for vintage-style maps. Keep the adjustments subtle – the aim is to soften the flat areas of colour and give them a more natural look.





QUICK TIP

To vary the hand-drawn elements like the trees and buildings, go to **Edit>Transform>Flip Horizontal**. The buildings and trees can also be layered on top of one another or adjusted in size to give the impression of more variety and to disguise any repeated elements within the piece.



13 ADD TEXTURE TO THE SHIELD

On the title shield layer, go to **Layer>Duplicate Layer** and then **Window>Styles>Sun Faded Photo**. Reduce the Opacity of the layer to 30% and select the Eraser tool. Go to **Window>Brush** and check the box for Scattering. Reduce the Eraser tool Opacity to 40% and selectively erase parts of the duplicated shield so the gradient looks more natural. Set the blending mode to **Overlay**. As with the previous steps, the layer effects should be subtle and are intended just to break up the flat colour slightly.



10 ICONIC FEATURES

London has a lot of design elements that are famous around the world and can instantly help the viewer see which city they are looking at. Max Gill used the design for the Underground station sign within part of his composition. For the example map, the design of the famous blue plaques has been incorporated into the artwork. This created space to add some strange and interesting facts to the map that will help to engage the viewer further.

11 INCLUDE MORE DETAILS

When the main areas in the map have been laid out, it is a good time to review the piece and see which areas need more detail, as well as areas of interest that work well. Trees are a good way to add some additional life to an illustrated map, and you'll find some examples included on FileSilo. As the piece starts to fill up, go to **View>Fit On Screen** and review the composition regularly to make sure it doesn't become too busy or cramped.



12 ADD A TITLE SHIELD

In the template file, the bottom-right-hand side has space for a scroll or a shield to use as a title. There is an example shield provided that can be used if necessary. Copy and paste this design to drop it into the map and use the Move tool to resize it so that it fits the area. Like before, use the Paint Bucket tool to colour the scroll in a neutral blue tone, with darker shading for the folded areas.



14 TIDY UP THE ARTWORK

Work on each folder in the document in turn and then go to **Layer>Merge Group**. This will make the file much easier to handle and will mean that each set of elements in the illustration can be edited easily and at once. The next step is to zoom in and check over each section of the image for areas that look disconnected or too collaged. Select the Brush tool and opt for a hard, round brush, using this to fill in any disjointed sections or errors. You want to ensure that your map looks natural and realistic, so it's important that you take your time on this.

15 FINISH THE IMAGE

Go to **Layer>New Layer**. Make sure that the new layer is on top of the existing layers and go to **Paint Bucket tool>Pattern**. Choose a paper texture, then select **Paint Bucket tool>Fill** and set the layer mode to **Overlay** and the Opacity to around 35%. Select the Eraser tool>**Watercolor Light Opacity** and set the brush setting to **Texture**. Make sure that Scattering is checked and Opacity is around 20%, then selectively erase some areas of the paper texture. Once this is complete, add a title to the image and go to **Layer>Flatten Image**.



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DESIGN ARRESTING POSTERS

YOU'VE GOT TO GRAB YOUR VIEWER'S ATTENTION AND SQUEEZE
UNTIL THEY CAN'T LET GO. BUT POSTER DESIGN CAN BE FUN TOO...



© Eric Nyffeler

Andrew Bird

appearing with Kelly Hogan // August 20th, 2012
Holland Performing Arts Center // Omaha, NE

Posters are everywhere. They feature a particular juxtaposition of word and image (though it don't have to contain both) that somehow sees them sum up the zeitgeist like no other form of graphic design or illustration.

"A good poster demands attention," explains Neal Williams (www.epicproblems.com). "It may have an intriguing or flowing composition or it may have a juxtaposition of elements that tells an interesting story. It doesn't necessarily need to put the information the poster is relating front and centre, but the poster should draw the viewer in so that the viewer wants to find out what it is all about."

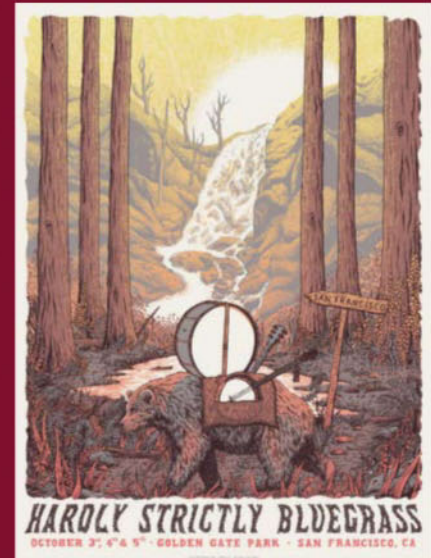
Making the viewer active in 'reading' the poster is key. "First, it should tell a story," says Mark Forsman (www.markforsman.com), "and it should tell that story whether you're 20 feet away or right up in front of it. It should change as you approach it and grow with depth and detail." Forsman describes his own as "nature inspired... rustic with a dirty, handmade feeling..." In contrast, Eric Nyffeler (www.doe-eyed.com) says he "combines the flat, geometric shapes and bright colours of mid-century American illustration with the bold typography and slightly psychedelic concepts of 1960s/1970s European (specifically Polish) posters. The brightly coloured flat geometry of my illustrations combine easily with large, bold typography and work especially well in the context of screen printing."

Glen Brogan (www.albinoraven.com) looks back to older designs too, specifically drawing

DEFINING DETAILS

THE DETAIL-RICH STYLE OF NEAL WILLIAMS REQUIRES CONSIDERABLE PRECISION, BUT THANKFULLY HE HAS PHOTOSHOP'S PEN TOOL ON HAND

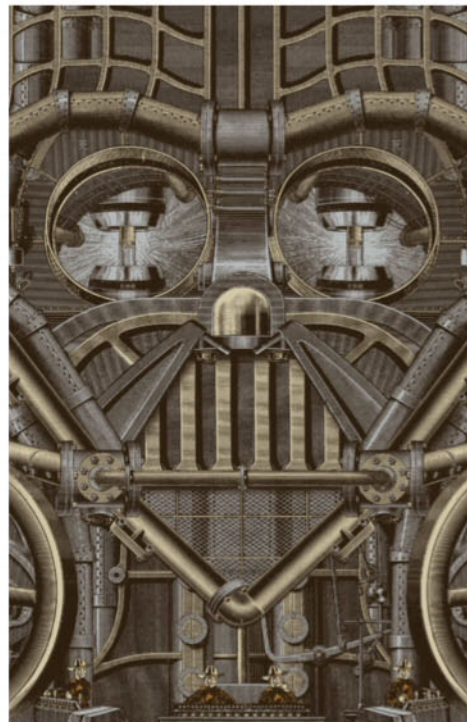
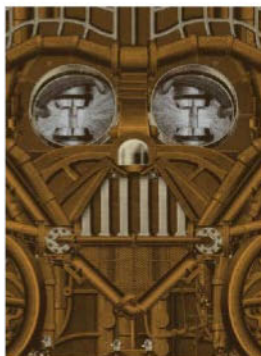
"The Pen tool is definitely my go-to Photoshop feature," says Neal Williams. "With screenprinting, you need to 'trap' colours under the linework, since inevitably things will shift or the paper will expand or shrink and you need a little wiggle room to keep the colours in registration (lined up). So, when creating colour fills in my poster designs, I'll zoom way in and make thousands of points inside the linework to create the selections that I fill with colour. Sometimes, if the linework forms an uninterrupted outline, I can select areas or select and then inverse other areas to fill with colour, but other times the Pen tool is the way to go. I tend to enjoy the monotonous aspects of poster design."



inspiration from "old cartoons and illustrations, and from the mid-century modern design aesthetic, so I like to give my work sort of a retro feel. I think part of why I like that is because most people have a fondness for the look and feel of an older time, but I also think it's because that retro aesthetic is genuinely based on really good, solid design." As someone who has worked for Marvel and Disney, Matt Ferguson (www.cakesandcomics.com) likes to call his style "illustrated minimalism. By that I mean I will boil down a subject into one idea or scene

but still illustrate it fully."

Some poster designers have been lucky enough to really collaborate with the artists their posters are for, and that can be a great way to find inspiration. As Rob Jones (www.animalrummy.com) puts it, "I've been lucky so far in that I've done most of my work for Jack White and his various bands, where my personal tastes appear in line with their thematic pursuits." Some poster designers come to the art because they love the endeavours the posters are about, and others have a style that just begs to be blown up and hung on the wall.



A FRESH VISION OF AN OLD FAVOURITE

ROB JONES REVEALS HOW HE CREATED THIS STRIKING VISION OF DARTH VADER FOR MONDO/ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE

01 FROM IMAGE TO ENGRAVING

I started off selecting a straight image of Vader's helmet to guide image construction. Then I tried out images from various collections of mechanical engravings. In the first few I had a weird girder of sorts to define the outside edge of his 'mouth' that didn't seem to define that area well enough before switching it out for a heavier piece.

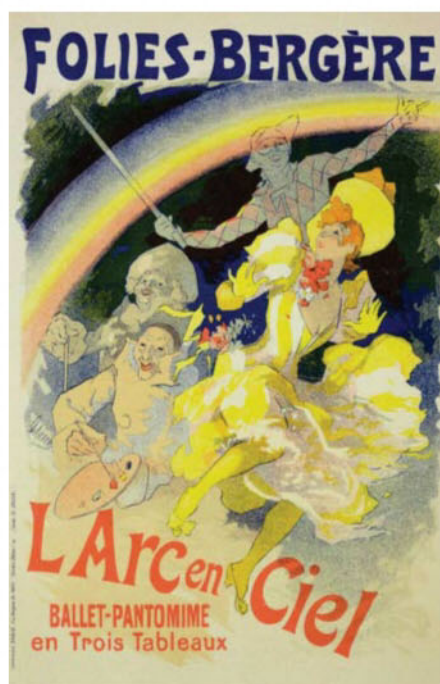
02 BACK TO BLACK?

Too much metallic copper in this instance felt showy. Limiting it to just the eyes made it feel like the Vader image was wearing hunting shades. I decided in the end to limit the copper to the already-established costume colours of the cowboy clones.

03 WINDOWS OF THE SOUL

Vader's eyes were a big issue. He looked too surprised with the round portals used. I tried several options and flirted with making them into windows with an exposed skeleton inside (the bare soul behind the armour)... Here's a fun fact: I took the kanji for 'death' and placed it five times on the final image to form the points of an inverted pentagram. I thought it would be a funny way of having a 'death star' in there.

© Rob Jones



The Rainbow: The father of modern posters, Jules Chéret is still much admired and copied today



On The Job For Victory: The First World War allowed the patriotic propaganda poster to flourish

Posters are an ancient artform but their golden age began in the 1800s. Like no other, artist Jules Chéret can be considered the father of the modern poster. Using the recent invention of lithography, he became the driving force of a wave of bright, clear designs combining text and illustration. Artists of the avant-garde movement also embraced the medium, usually to advertise luxury goods. The feeling of excess, the colourful style and the prominent female figure, of which Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's 1891 Moulin Rouge poster is probably the most famous, were the key to their appeal. Lucian Bernhard then pushed the form in a sparer direction, which focussed on the product and the information. Then came World War I and the era of the propaganda poster. After the wars it was Swiss design and typography – with its clarity and well-to-do sophistication – that came to prominence.

"Design trends come and go," says Nyffeler, "each having their time in the spotlight. While the last decade saw some hugely popular scenes based in minimalism and Swiss-inspired design,

there currently seems to be a strong resurgence in highly technical and incredibly detailed draftsmanship that draws as much from 19th Century commercial art as it does Renaissance printmaking." But while these influences are certainly felt in modern poster design, today's designers are often most drawn to what happened in the 1960s and onwards.

Because today's teenagers might have profile pictures and ringtones too, but it's always been with the posters on their walls – the tennis girl, the *Trainspotting* line-up or Che Guevara – that young people declare their identity. By putting up posters, people scream to the world, "This is who I am." This can be traced to the 1960s, when the dominance of photography in print advertising and the cultural power of pop and rock music saw the dawn of the psychedelic poster. Lurid colours, suggestive poses and cool were the name of the game.

Frank Kozik was the artist that first hooked Jones into poster design. "I saw his works in the pulpy flesh for the first time at some London record store in 1993," he says. "It was so brashly

Stiller: The product-orientated work of Lucian Bernhard demonstrates how he brought a simplicity to poster design



© Neal Williams

TELL A TALE

NEAL WILLIAMS EXPLAINS HOW HE TRIES TO ENTICE THE VIEWER IN

"In the type of illustration-heavy poster design I do," explains Williams, "I feel like the composition always works best when it tells some kind of a story. For instance, I did a poster recently that just looks like a large tree as seen from a low viewpoint. From a distance it's just a tree, and the interesting perspective may draw you in. But as you look closer there is a deteriorating fence around the tree, and the background field is full of tree stumps. You realize there is some kind of narrative involved." By the time the viewer has realised that, they're involved enough to be reading the text, so "incorporating the text in a way that doesn't feel tacked-on" is also important to Williams. He says: "I always hand-draw my type so it has a natural feel similar to the poster art and I'll try to place it in a creative way that maintains the flow of the composition."

bright with type that was a welcome scream. I fell for his work pretty hard, as evidenced by my early attempts at gigpostery in which I unabashedly tried hard to ape his angles. It wasn't until I got the White Stripes gig and produced silkscreens at a rapid clip that I finally managed to develop my own voice. That's usually the way for the folks though, you emulate your heroes until you figure it out (like Buck Owens copying George Jones until he figured out his own distinct twang)."



“Design trends come and go, each having their time in the spotlight. While the last decade saw some hugely popular scenes based in minimalism and Swiss-inspired design, there currently seems to be a strong resurgence in highly technical and incredibly detailed draftsmanship...”

ERIC NYFFELER, WWW.DOE-EYED.COM

CARTOON COMPOSITION

GLEN BROGAN REVEALS THE SECRETS OF CREATING POSTERS WITH PLENTY OF DETAILED CARTOON FUN

01 | SKETCH START

Computer Space is a poster that Glen Brogan created for his first ever solo show at Gallery 1988 in LA, in the summer of 2013. This shows his “rough drawing of all the characters in the piece, over some even rougher drawings of the background elements.”



02 | CONSIDER COLOUR

This is the completed background, which Brogan does so he can make sure the colour and placement of characters will look right. “Composition is definitely something you get a feel for after a while,” he says, “and I think the starting point is to recognise the different visual weights of various design elements, like big versus small, dark colours versus light; things like that.”



03 | FIND YOUR STYLE

I think it's important to do things that you can really only do in your specific style,” says Brogan, “and things that work to the advantage of that style. So for example, since I work with a retro cartoon look, I can draw a house using crazy angles that might not make sense if it were to physically exist, but doing so makes for a more interesting drawing overall. I really try to abstract characters and objects in creative ways, which I think comes off as more visually pleasing.

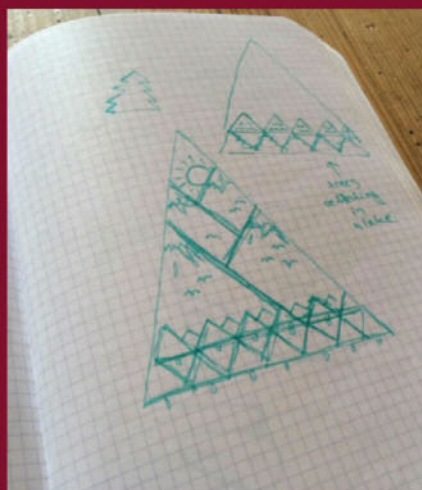


► TEXTURE TALK

ERIC NYFFELER EXPLAINS HOW AUTHENTICITY IS ACHIEVED IN A SKETCH TO VECTOR TO TEXTURED PROCESS

01 | BOTTLE YOUR LIGHTNING

"I typically begin my posters with an incredibly rough sketch," says Nyffeler, "usually scribbled in a notebook minutes after waking up or on the back of a napkin while walking down the street." Then he scans his sketch and builds a composition in Illustrator.



02 | BUILD IT UP...

"Every piece of the composition is printed in black and white and then textured and distressed using a variety of different processes. 1970s/80s photocopiers are my favourite way of making shapes look trashy and aged. Lacquer thinner and splattered paint are two other common texturing methods."



03 | ...BREAK IT DOWN

All of the black and white chunks are then scanned into Photoshop, where I apply Levels, Brightness/Contrast, and very specific Burning and Dodging to refine the shapes to a specific balance of clarity and texture. The individual pieces are then composited together into the specific layers intended for screen printing."



For Ferguson, there are two main factors when it comes to poster construction: "Number one, you have to have a good idea. A poster needs to be able to grab someone's attention, and the best way to do that is with a clever hook. Number two, composition is really important; the poster should be pleasing to the eye and easy to digest visually. If you have those two things a poster can be really very simple and relatively easy to execute."

But what if you're not sure if you've got a great idea, or that you're working towards a pleasing composition? Brogan likes to save a preview of his work and look at it thumbnail-sized on his desktop: "I look at it and think, 'Does this still look interesting when it's this small? If I had no idea what this piece was, would looking at this tiny icon interest me enough to look closer and see what the drawing really is?' That's something I do to try and gauge if a piece is going to grab people's attention or not. If it has something that makes it stand out when it's that little, then that can be a sign of a strong design."

A strong design is the goal of course, and many of the tricks and techniques that poster designers use are no different to that which other artists, illustrators and graphic designers would use. For Forsman, the key to composition is balance. "If everything is competing for your eye," he says, "there's no way to tell any kind of story and it can completely derail the idea." And you can further use that balance to attract people's eyes, if you simply "have something off. Do as much as

“ I always try and use colour to evoke a sense of place and feeling. It's one of the toughest things to do, but when it's right it can completely transport you ”

MARK FORSMAN, WWW.MARKFORSMAN.COM

© Eric Nyffeler



you can with as little as you can," adds Forsman.

"I always try to think roughly in triangles," says Ferguson. "Think an upside-down pyramid. So the design draws the eye down to a focal point. I find that my posters are often much more pleasing to the eye if I use this simple trick." That focal point might be the text, and Jones says he tries to integrate "the type directly into the design rather than have it as a separate headline. That usually means your info will become less bold and noticeable, but lately I tend to enjoy quieter posters." Generally this works best for celebratory merchandise posters rather than those directly selling, where Jones "can afford that luxury of sublimating the band's name on occasion. Of course there are times when a bold headline serves the design better."

Of course, colour is one the most important things a poster designer has to play with. As Williams explains, the limited colour palette necessitated by screenprinting has to always be considered: "I print by hand, so if I'm doing a run of 200 posters, a four-colour poster means 800 passes of the squeegee. That can make for a fairly tiring day's work. Given that, I'll usually try to limit my posters to four or five colours if I'm on a deadline. I tend to favour fairly natural colours. Since I'm often trying to create depth in my posters, I'll use different shades of the same colour to help secondary elements fade into the background and accentuate the focal point."

Colour isn't just about drawing people's attention though, it's also about making them feel what you want them to feel. "I always try and use colour to evoke a sense of place and feeling," says Forsman. "It's one of the toughest things to do, but when it's right it can completely transport you." To have this mastery of your domain, Ferguson says he tries to keep colours to a minimum: "I always start a poster with a base colour that informs the whole poster. A nice bright colour can be very eye catching, as can the lack of it." Meanwhile, Williams says, "my work relies heavily on the detail and linework in my illustrations. My favourite part of the process is being hunched over at my table making fine lines and textures with pen on paper."



CATCH THE EYE

THE POSTER HAS MANY TRICKS UP ITS SLEEVE, AND THEY CAN BE TEXTUAL AS WELL AS A QUESTION OF COMPOSITION

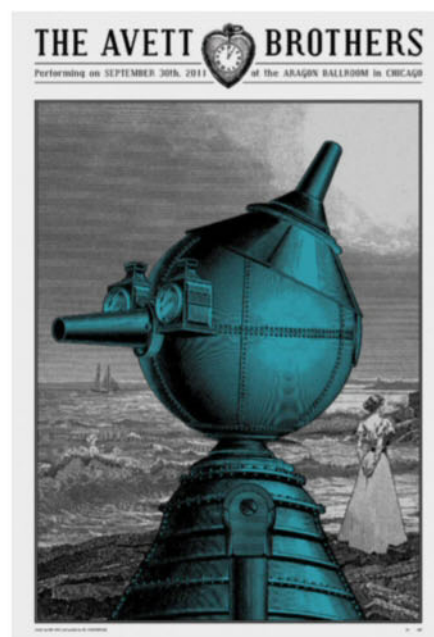
Direct address is one of the poster's great strengths, shown off to perfection in the propaganda poster ('Your Country Needs You' and 'Keep Calm and Carry On') as well as the advertising poster, where a problem the viewer didn't know they had is brought into sharp focus. Humour is another great possibility, whether the gag is verbal or visual, and the simple meanings and associations that we have with different colours can be used to particular great effect when the poster's size means that you can be talking such a physically large space.

Use the constraints of the particular poster genre you're working in as challenges. In music posters you have a lot of freedom, but you need to sum up the feel of the music in visual form. In film posters the most important thing is that it looks like a genuine film poster, and that means studying the genre of film you're promoting and having it fit that mould. Also, don't feature your actors unless they are bona fide movie stars.



Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes: "Make the art for yourself," advises Matt Ferguson. "I'm my own worst critic so I just keep going on a poster until I am happy with it."

The Avett Brothers: "When creating images from old engravings," explains Rob Jones, "the main process that eats my nights concerns rounding off each engraving line where it meets the edge of another separate engraved image. I zoom in and add a pixel or two on top and bottom for each line so the result feels like an integrated whole."



© Rob Jones

▶ MAKE IT PERSONAL

ROB JONES LIKES TO MAKE SURE HIS POSTERS HAVE PERSONAL MEANING, EVEN IF THAT MEANING ISN'T EASILY APPARENT TO THE AUDIENCE

"If you make it more personal, then you tend to create more interesting and unique imagery," says Jones, who recently made a poster for Jack White's show at Red Rocks. "I've found most artists who do Red Rocks posters tend to showcase the natural beauty of the venue," says Jones. Instead, he decided to concentrate on the sense of community in the small town of Morrison, where like-minded folks have journeyed to see the music.

"This made me recall a lyric from Jack's recent tune, *That Black Bat Licorice*," says Jones; "And get my feelings hurt / And move to New York like I'm Dumbo". I can't speak to what the lyric meant to Jack, but for me that image of Dumbo moving to NYC evoked the contrast I experienced growing up in Albany, GA, a smaller, more conservative city, compared to my current digs in Austin, TX. I didn't have an easy time in Albany and felt a bit like Dumbo getting pelted with hoots and wide eyes. When I moved to Austin, there were plenty of other elephants with big ears or wearing clown hats and collars. I felt comfortable and unnoticed, like I belonged. I wagered having the same sort of feeling at a Red Rocks show, something tribal, something more than I would experience at a concert held in a regular club atmosphere. When I created the image, I wanted a flying elephant to appear unremarkable against the Times Square backdrop. He's up in the air, but folks on the ground aren't gawking. They've seen it before and accept it as part of their city."

© Rob Jones



“In the mid to late 90s people were seduced by the ease of doing things digitally, but the tools weren't really fully formed to actually make the posters better than traditional art.”

MATT FERGUSON, WWW.CAKESANDCOMICS.COM

Dave Matthews Band: "Recently it seems that artists are playing with form and composition in interesting ways and trying to push their skills as far as possible," says Neal Williams



© Neal Williams

Eye-catching, mood-evoking then, colour is also a way that a poster designer can make their individual style clear. Nyffeler loves "rendering the scenes of [his] posters with non-objective colours, yet still clearly recognisable. Make an ocean green instead of blue. Make a deer pink instead of brown. Make a building orange instead of concrete. Make a mountain purple instead of stone. I think the mind instinctively enjoys seeing familiar subjects represented in subtly new manners."

Demonstrating your own style isn't always the priority though, not if you're working on a commissioned piece. Jones offers a good piece of advice if you work in various different styles: "When I'm hired by a new client, I ask them to go through my work and pick five to ten pieces that they like *and* five to ten pieces that exhibit a style or content they feel inappropriate for the task at hand. The latter usually helps me more than the former in formulating an approach."

Like any other branch of creative endeavour, if you're working to clients' expectations then you need to have one eye on what the next big hot trend is. At the moment, Jones says that "heavy illustration" seems to wear the poster crown. "Photomanipulations and starker designs don't seem to ignite the applause they once did back in the gig poster blow-up of the early [21st Century]," he says, adding that "overexposure of style and content" is part of the issue. Brogan thinks he's seen a general move towards "a more simple and graphic look lately, which I personally think is great. Not everything is moving that way, of course, which is good because variety and unique voices are extremely important, but I know that I have seen a lot more things done in that sort of retro graphic style in the last few years." He points to the newest Pepsi logo as an illustration of this style. "It's very simple and clean, when typically we're used to seeing fast food and junk food logos that have lots of gradients, shine marks, shadows, and that sort of thing. I think people are starting to realise again just how appealing a simple design can be when it's done well."

Ferguson thinks there's a harking back too, to "how posters used to be in the 70s/80s. Illustrated pieces of art rather than simple photomanipulations. This is because the current wave of designers/collectors grew up loving those kinds of posters and also the

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA PAINTING

MATT FERGUSON EXPLAINS HOW HE ADAPTS HIS STYLE TO THE MOVIE PROJECT AT HAND

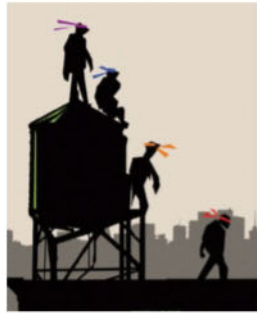
01 | DIFFERENT STROKES

"I don't really have a style," says Matt Ferguson. "I try to just do what feels right for each individual poster. So you will see fully illustrated posters or minimalist stuff from me depending on my own thoughts about the poster in question." Either way, the first step is to sketch out a rough comp to get a feel for placement.



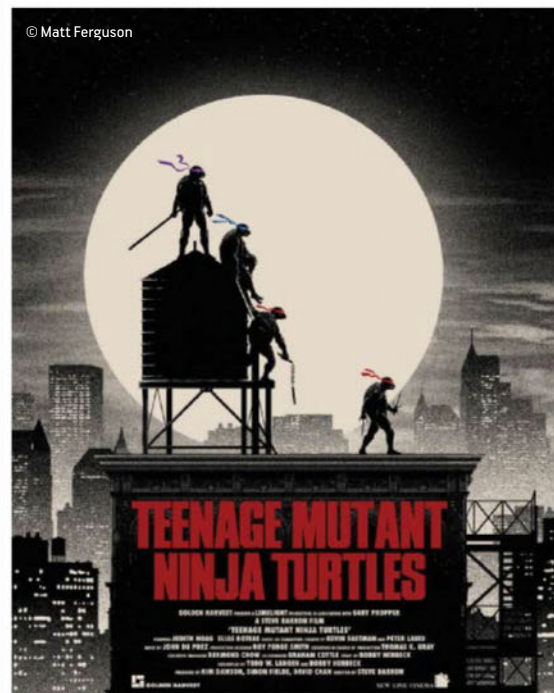
02 | WATCH FILE SIZE

"Second I will block out shapes and colour to get a feel for how it will end up," says Ferguson. "When you are making a poster that is 24 x 36 and it needs to be at least 300dpi, the file is automatically already huge. Then factor in upwards of 1,000 layers for a really complicated design and I find I often crash my computer."

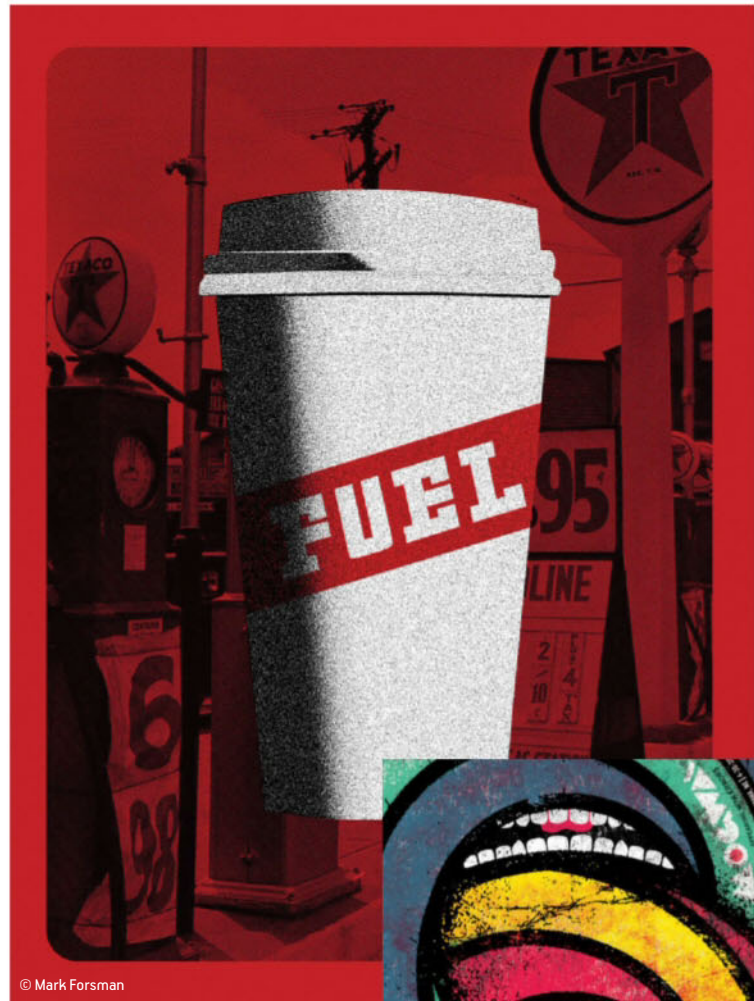


03 | PAINT AND POLISH

Finally it's a question of painting everything in proper detail and setting it up for screen print. "I exclusively use Photoshop and a tablet," says Ferguson. "I really just treat it like painting and do it pretty much all freehand."



© Matt Ferguson



© Mark Forsman

Fuel: "Start by sketching," advises Mark Forsman, "digitally or on paper, but start with a place for your mind to play, not a blank Photoshop canvas. You can solve a lot of the issues you'll run into with that simple first step of thinking everything through."



Mogwai: "Composition as whole is a balancing act, where the slightest disproportion could throw the entire piece out of whack," says Eric Nyffeler

© Eric Nyffeler

technology to do such art digitally has really come along. In the mid to late 90s people were seduced by the ease of doing things digitally, but the tools weren't really fully formed to actually make the posters better than traditional art."

Forsman thinks he sees too many minimalistic movie posters. "There are a few designers who do an incredible job, and the rest are really mediocre," he says. But he's more irritated by people who sell their work without obtaining the rights to use the movie's name, so he hopes "the future is one where everyone tries to create something new."

But whether a poster is celebrating a favourite film, promoting a new one, selling a product or shouting a slogan, there's one thing it certainly needs, and that's confidence. It's artwork that has to grab the viewer – their eyes won't alight on the wallflower poster – and once it's grabbed the attention, it needs to reel the viewer in. For Nyffeler, "A good poster is a merger of composition and content. Regardless of whether a poster contains photography, illustration, and/or/only typography, it will make an immediate first impression yet continue to reveal depth and content upon further scrutiny."

EDIT IMAGES SMARTLY IN DXO 8

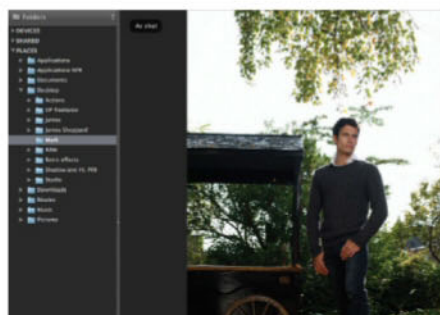
FIND OUT HOW TO CORRECT YOUR IMAGES QUICKLY AND EASILY IN DXO'S OPTICS PRO 8

Whether you are looking to create an entirely new image or you simply want to make adjustments an existing photo, correcting any distortion or flaws is always the first step in any editing session. Whether it's subtle sharpening tweaks or performing lens correction, you need to be certain that the base image for your final piece is a firm foundation that won't let you down.

DxO Optics Pro 8 is one of the latest in a well-regarded series of freestanding image editors and RAW processors. Renowned for its ease of use,

low price, as well as its high-quality editing tools and lens/camera-calibration algorithms, DxO 8 is a great springboard for final images and base edits alike.

In this tutorial we will be using DxO 8 to show you how to get started, correct, and output your images simply and easily. Looking at the file-browsing options and – more importantly – the editing panel, we will utilise DxO's Unsharp Mask and Lens Softness options to sharpen our image. The Color Correction and Contrast tools will also be used to increase the image's vibrancy and contrast before ultimately exporting it as a final saved image.



01 | USE THE TREE MENU TO FIND A FILE

For this tutorial, we need to find the right kind of image to work with. By selecting the Organize tab at the top-left of the panel, we can use an expanded tree view to select the relevant folder that our image is located in. When you find your folder, the images will automatically load at the bottom of your page. As DxO 8 doesn't accept DNG files, we will use RAW. If the image you want to use is DNG, then you will have to extract the RAW using third-party software.



OUR EXPERT
JAMES SHEPPARD
@jimmilazers

With over a decade of commercial photographic experience and nearly two decades of Photoshop experience, I believe that you never stop learning.

SOURCE FILES

Get started with DxO Optics Pro 8 with a free download worth £239, available from our FileSilo page.



02 | CUSTOMISE YOUR IMAGE

Once your image is selected, a preview of it will appear automatically, as well as an auto alert to any new lens or camera profiles available from the images you are using. If this message appears, click Accept and the images in your collection will be automatically calibrated to the camera and lens combination used to create them. To begin your editing session, click the button next to the Organize button – Customize. Now go to the top-right and you will see a Workspace tab. Select Advanced User and you will see all of the editing options available to you.

03 | LOOK SHARP

To begin with, we will want to sharpen the image as much as possible to bring back the edge detail a little. DxO 8 is a great program to use for sharpening images, especially with its Unsharp Mask tool. This feature brings back edge detail and clarity, but you need to view your image at 100% or higher to see the resulting impact. To get started, here we will click on the Unsharp Mask, setting the Intensity to 253, the Radius to 2.10, the Threshold to 35 and the Edge Offset to 49.



04 | HYPER-REAL COLOURS

DxO 8 also has a great colour enhancement system that will allow the detail from oversaturated areas to be brought back, reducing the chance of flat areas of colour and improving the all-round detail available in the image. For this step, we will alter the colour rendering of the image, so set the Category to Camera Body and select the camera body that you used. Now adjust the Intensity to 98 and raise the Intensity of Protect Saturated Colors to 48. Last of all, boost the Color Accentuation's Vibrancy by 60 and the Saturation to 10.



■ QUICK TIP

Whenever making adjustments to an image, it's helpful to work with the Compare panel open so that you can see how far you are pushing the image. As there isn't a History panel as such for you to step back to, using this panel gives you a default comparison to edit back to if need be.



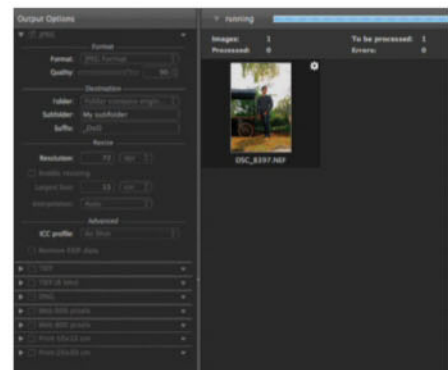
05 | ADJUST THE CONTRAST AND EXPOSURE

Use a combination of Exposure Compensation, Smart Lighting, and the Contrast panel to add contrast and detail back to the image. Starting with the Exposure Compensation, reduce to -0.70. With the DxO Smart Lighting, set the mode to Custom and raise the Intensity to 150. Then use the Contrast tab and raise the Contrast to 35 as well as the Microcontrast, which can be raised by 10. All of these adjustments will allow the image to have more contrast without becoming oversaturated.



06 | USE THE LENS SOFTNESS TOOL

Now that the image is looking close to completion, it's time to add the finishing touches. In this instance, we will be using the Lens Softness adjustment panel. This tool is designed to reduce imperfections to an image caused by the lens choice, and as a result, pulls in the sharpness of the image even more. We will open up the Lens Softness panel and make the following adjustments: Global: 0.40, Details: +65, Bokeh: 50.



07 | EXPORT THE IMAGE

The image adjustments we have created to build the image aren't all instantly included into the image's metadata. Instead, they reside in a DOP file format, similar to the XMP sidecar data of a RAW file. To commit the adjustments to your image, you will need to export it. By clicking the Process tab at the top-left of the page, once selected, simply drag and drop your image into the central panel for a more straightforward save to disk. When saving to disk, again, you have a selection of options ranging from JPEG, DNG, and TIFF. Select your preference, and then save it in the location that you want.

■ WORK IN PROGRESS

SUBTLE FIXES FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT



Progress 1: Sharpen your image



Progress 2: Increase the contrast



Progress 3: Use the Lens Softness feature

DNG support
For improved integration with Lightroom, the latest version of DxO Optics Pro now features support for DNG files

Speed matters
The overall speed of the software has been greatly increased, with both boot times and image-loading times now much faster

ClearView
The latest DxO Optics Pro features a new algorithm for dealing with clarity issues caused by environmental haze

PRIME enhanced
The processing speed of DxO's PRIME de-noising technology is now four times faster and the noise-reduction palette has been improved



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IF YOU'RE IMPRESSED WITH DXO OPTICS PRO 8 AND WANT TO EXPERIENCE THE MOST RECENT VERSION, USE THIS EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNT CODE



DxO Optics Pro 8 is available to you completely for free this month, just for purchasing Issue 129 of Advanced Photoshop magazine (head to page 96). However, if you'd like to have access to all the latest innovations offered by DxO Labs, you can get an exclusive discount on the newest version of the software, as part of an exclusive special offer available until 28 February 2015.

The latest version picks up where previous incarnations left off, but adds in some impressive new features. The most noteworthy of these is ClearView, which is designed to combat all the various forms of atmospheric haze that can have a detrimental impact on image quality. This works by establishing a Depth map in order to evaluate the

camera-to-subject distance and therein determine the strength of the adjustment that's required.

DxO's PRIME (Probabilistic Raw Image Enhancement) de-noising technology has also been enhanced, with processing times up to four times faster than in previous versions and with an improved noise-reduction palette as well. Further improvements have been made to the Smart Lighting and Lens Softness tools, which both boast improved precision.

In addition, the new DxO Optics Pro now integrates with the geometric-correction facilities offered by DxO Viewpoint, while the White Balance and Dust Correction tools can now be used in full-screen mode for improved functionality. This is part of a wider revision and improvement of the

user interface and editing experience, with the image browser being simplified. The overall speed of the software has been boosted too, with the software boot time up by 1.5 and the image-loading speed up by ten times over previous versions. There's also new support for DNG files for a smoother workflow between DxO Optics Pro and Lightroom.

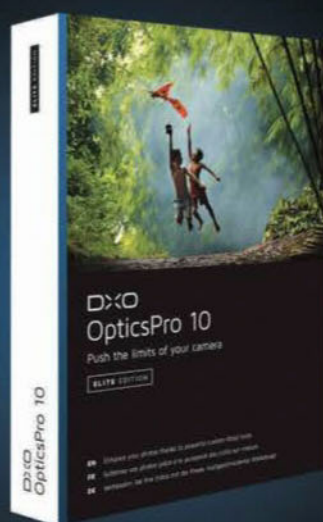
Using the exclusive discount code **ADVANCEDPS1114** at the checkout at the DxO Labs website (www.dxo.com), you can receive a 25% discount on the price of DxO Optics Pro Elite Edition. This will retail at £159/\$199, but with our special offer, you can purchase it for just £119/\$149. Don't delay, though, as the offer is only valid until 28 February 2015.



DxO OpticsPro 10

Push the limits of your camera

Thanks to DxO OpticsPro's exclusive technologies, instantly correct all the optical defects of your equipment, remove digital noise even at high sensitivities, recover fine details and textures in dark or burnt areas, eliminate heat haze and bring out all the nuances of colour in your images.



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Offer ends February 28th 2015



EPSON EXPRESSION PHOTO XP-760

WE TEST OUT EPSON'S ALL-IN-ONE PRINTER TO FIND OUT WHETHER IT PACKS ENOUGH FEATURES INTO ITS COMPACT SIZE. IS THIS PRINT-ANYWHERE MODEL A WORTHY CONTENDER FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS WHO WANT HIGH-QUALITY, PHYSICAL COPIES OF THEIR WORK?

www.epson.com

• £230 / approx. \$364 • Windows XP, 7, 8, Vista / Mac OS X 10.6.8+

When looking for your next printer to satisfy your creative needs, there are an overwhelming number of options on the market, at an equally varied number of price points. Epson is arguably the most prominent consumer printer manufacturer, producing a range of models to cater for the occasional users, as well as creatives who demand a more flexible range of options.

The Expression Photo XP-760 comes from Epson's all-in-one range of inkjet printers. Marketed as an A4 printer for photo enthusiasts, the model features a maximum print resolution of 5,760x1,400dpi. It's not the most compact printer ever made, but fares well compared to similar spec

models and would sit unobtrusively in a smaller space. This is a printer that's been designed to make mobile printing a breeze, but does this simplicity mean that we're missing out on other features? Versatile printing options should appeal to an array of digital artists, who want to make high-quality physical copies of their work on a range of different formats.

There are dual paper trays, one for A4 and another for photo paper, meaning that you don't have to constantly change the media for different print jobs, or waste photo paper on accidental prints. What's more, the feed at the rear enables printing onto much thicker card and canvas, giving great scope for experimentation.

We found the overall setup simple and speedy straight out of the box, with the added bonus that the printer comes with its first set of six Claria photo inks included. It's worth noting that each cartridge can be replaced separately and the replacement multipack will cost you around £52 (approx \$83), which is about average compared to similar six-ink models on the market. When we tested the printer with Epson's glossy photo paper, the prints produced were sharp and vivid, especially when handling rich colour files. What's more, the manufacturer claims that the Claria inks are smudge, water-resistant, and also fade-resistant under glass for up to 98 years, giving your prints a long-lasting quality should you want to sell them. ▶





Flexible media: The XP-760 prints on CDs and DVDs, and you can choose from two media trays, printing on A4 paper to various sizes and weights of paper

Digital artists will enjoy using the scan function as part of their workflow and the model handled pencil sketches, painted work and documents well at the full 600dpi, with the standard options of JPEG and PDF files offered. Setting up the size, contrast and resolution of the artwork was speedy thanks to the touch screen, though when we viewed the results on our computer, the results were slightly flat.

However, this shouldn't be a problem when the scans are going to be reworked in Photoshop.

We linked the XP-760 to an external computer, as well as a smartphone and range of memory cards, enabling the most to be had out of this model's connection options. It jumped across storage devices and functions without any delay, again impressing with its ease of use.

CHECK OUT THE ALTERNATIVES

If you're looking for a cheaper option or an expanded feature set, then these printers are worth a look



CANON PIXMA MG7550

www.canon.com

£190 / \$300 – This powerful all-in-one photo printer from Canon offers a higher maximum resolution of 9600x2400dpi, along with a lower price point. Mobile devices can be connected quickly with NFC support, and though there's no rear feed, photo paper up to 300 g/m² can be printed onto.



HP PHOTOSMART 7520

www.hp.co.uk

£192 / \$303 – The 7520 doesn't have the option for direct CD/DVD printing and uses five inks compared to six. Maximum printing resolution is higher than the Epson XP-760 at 9600x2400dpi, but it's probably worth a bit extra for the versatile media options that the others offer.



EPSON STYLUS PHOTO 1500W

www.epson.com

£350 / \$553 – This A3+ model comes at a much higher RRP than the other models, but its large printing size makes it perfect for freelance designers looking for high-quality printing in big formats. Although there's no scan function, connectivity features are still packed, as well as the versatile media it's capable of printing on.



Quality colour: When we tested the set of six colour inks, they delivered smooth tonal gradations, deep blacks and rich, vibrant colours, producing striking results



Easy operation: The motorised control panel and output tray are a nice touch, but the 10.9cm interactive LCD touch screen is the greatest asset, making operation quick and intuitive

When we compare the model to other Epson photo printers, it makes sense to place the XP-760 as a central all-in-one that's capable of producing high-quality prints from a wealth of different connectivity options. We tested out the Wi-Fi and Ethernet connections, which were a breeze to use, and enjoyed having a workspace as free as possible from untidy cables.

The added Scan To Email function could be useful for sending samples of your work to others, particularly if you were working collaboratively with someone across the globe. The body itself is glossy and attractive, but the loading mechanisms can feel clunky at times. For the digital artist, the Expression XP-760 is not just suited for working across various

media and creative workflows, but importantly produces prints and scans of a seriously impressive quality. However, if it's larger prints you're after, then you'll probably find that opting for an A3 inkjet printer would be a better solution, keeping a high-quality scanner as a separate peripheral. If you're not put off by the A4 size limitation, then you'll definitely enjoy welcoming this space-efficient model into your studio environment, especially when you consider its affordable price tag. It isn't the cheapest on the market, but its simple operation, packed connectivity features and high-resolution print-and-scan abilities are sure to cope with your creative demands. Who knows, the versatile media options might even expand your artistic potential.

WHAT THE MANUFACTURER SAYS

Simon Hanly
Consumer product manager, Epson UK



Keen digital artists should look no further than this superior all-rounder with Wi-Fi. The XP-760 takes our exceptional Claria

Photo HD Ink, a six-colour ink-set that will definitely help creatives to produce professional-quality, long-lasting prints of their work. As well as printing outstanding paper artwork, you can expand your creativity and print onto thicker media with the rear specialty feed, and what's more exciting is the ability to print directly onto CDs and DVDs. Setting up the XP-760 to work with laptops and computers is incredibly simple, with automatic Wi-Fi set up. Epson has also got you covered if you haven't got wireless connectivity, as Wi-Fi Direct means compatible devices can still be connected together without the need for a router. We've also recognised the valuable part mobile devices now play in the digital workflow and printing from mobile devices is easy too; simply use Epson iPrint to print from your smartphone or tablet. You can even print from anywhere in the world by emailing photos and documents directly to the printer. We understand that the scanning function is often as important as producing high-quality prints, and the contact image sensor scanner should enable quality re-creations of your artistic work.



Desk tidy: Wi-Fi connectivity means fewer cables cluttering your workspace, ideal for home studios where space is at a premium

VERDICT

Features: **8/10**

Ease of use: **9/10**

Quality of results: **8/10**

Value for money: **8/10**

FINAL SCORE: 8/10

FILTER FORGE 4.0 PROFESSIONAL EDITION

GET A FRESH LOOK AT FILTERS BY LEARNING HOW TO CREATE
AND USE YOUR OWN EFFECTS

www.filterforge.com • \$399 / approx. £252 • Windows 2000, XP, Vista, 7, 8 / Mac OS X 10.4+

Filters often get a bad rap from professional Photoshop artists. Principally that's because most digital artists have seen all of

Photoshop's filters before and while they excite newcomers to the program, they're often seen by more advanced users as something of a blunt instrument. However, filters are incredibly useful things, and with Filter Forge 4.0, you are not limited by the same old effects that are native to

Photoshop. Not only do you have access to thousands of pre-built filters, but you can also create a selection of your own.

This opens up a range of almost limitless possibilities for the clever Photoshop user. You can build custom adjustment-layer effects to control Hue, Saturation, Contrast and Curves. You can create quick and easy ways to apply textures without endless masking or recording Actions. You can even

go all-out and develop really original effects, like transforming photos into low-poly artwork without spending hours in Illustrator.

Building filters in Filter Forge 4.0 is made easy with a simple drag-and-drop interface. Grab an effect from the menu, drag it into the Editor and then connect it with one or more other effects to build up the look that you want. A live pane on the left-hand side of the interface shows you how your filter is developing. You

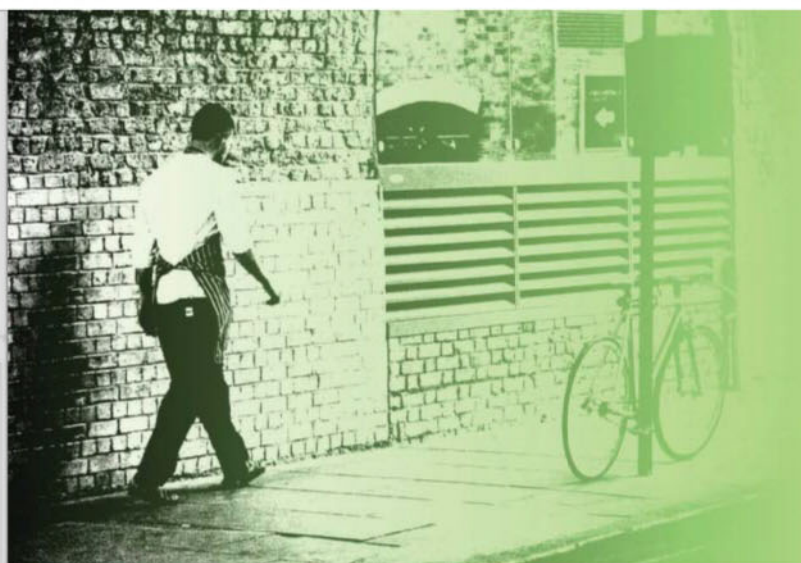
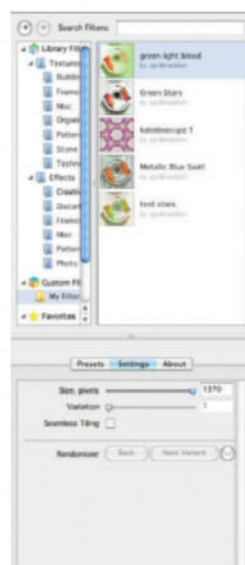
INSIDE FILTER FORGE 4.0

LEARN HOW TO FIND YOUR WAY AROUND THE FILTER FORGE 4.0 INTERFACE AND GET THE MOST FROM ITS TOOLS



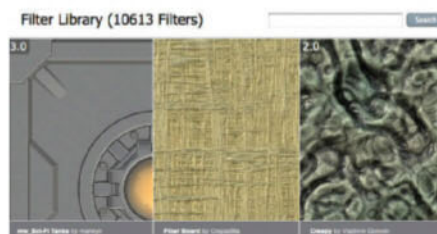
LIBRARY FILTERS

Built-in filters from Filter Forge 4.0's Library are stored here. The new Filter Organizer in Version 4.0 makes them easier to find and access, as they're divided into logical sub-sections such as Frames and Creative effects.



YOUR FILTERS

Filters that you create are stored under their own heading in Filter Forge 4.0. This is a really useful way to keep track of them, especially if you take advantage of the rewards system on the website – create and upload enough popular filters and you'll get a free copy of the software! Make sure that you name and describe them accurately if you want to upload your filters.



DOWNLOAD MORE FILTERS

Take advantage of the range of filters created by the Filter Forge community. Hit this button and you'll be taken straight to the website where you can preview and download thousands of user-generated filters covering every kind of effect you can think of. Check out the Featured section to find the best ones.



PRESETS, SETTINGS AND INFO

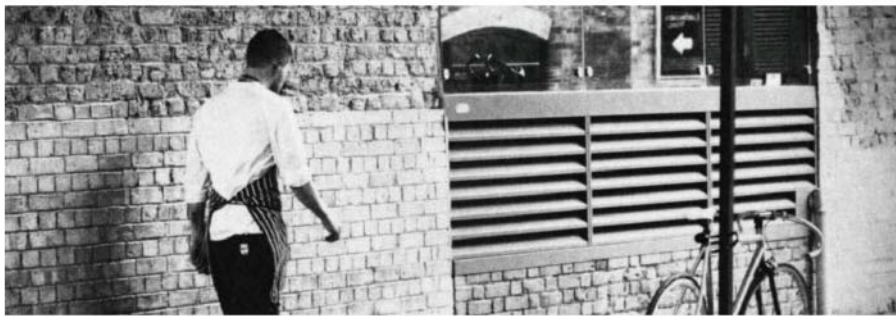
Many of the built-in and user-generated filters come with a range of presets. These can include different colours and textures, or different ways that creative effects like pixel art or polygon painting are applied. Settings enable you to modify filters for improved control, while the About tab provides you with more info about the filter and its creator.

can also click on any of the individual effects to see how it is building up throughout the process, giving you the opportunity to experiment. This is important, because the best way to build your own filters is often through trial, error and happy accident.

A good level of image-editing knowledge is essential – you need to know more than just the basics of adjusting colour and contrast – but you don't need to be able to code. A little knowledge of the maths behind colour theory may prove useful if you want to go in-depth, but it's not essential in Filter Forge. It's thoroughly enjoyable, and there's something about constructing your own filters that takes you straight back to your first heady days of playing around with Photoshop.

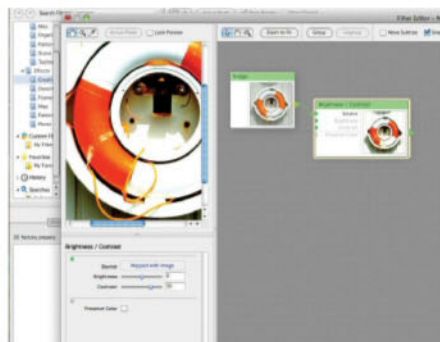
The program is also packed with user-generated filters, many of which are superior to Photoshop's default offerings. The great thing about all of these is that you can choose to open them in the Filter Editor, so you can pick them apart, see how they were made and learn how to make your own variants. They really show off the capabilities of the software. So is it worth reconsidering filters? Definitely, if they're the Filter Forge kind.

“There's something about constructing your own filters that takes you straight back to your first heady days of playing around with Photoshop”



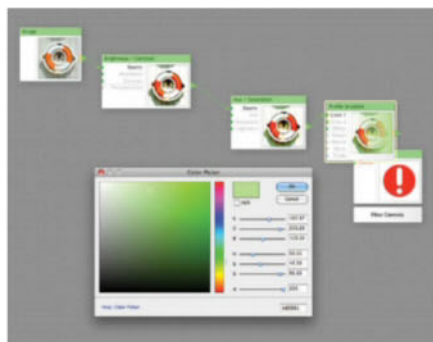
MAKE A SIMPLE FILTER

LEARN THE BASICS OF FILTER CREATION IN FILTER FORGE 4.0



01 OPEN THE FILTER EDITOR

Open the Filter Editor on the right-hand side of the interface and choose Create A New Filter (or you can edit pre-existing ones). The Filter Editor is made up of drag-and-drop blocks that enable you to bolt together different commands. For now, choose External>Image and then go to Adjustments> Brightness/Contrast. Drag a green arrow from the Image box to connect it to the Source option on the Brightness/Contrast segment.



02 BOLT TOGETHER COMMANDS

Now add a Hue/Saturation command to increase colour and a Profile Gradient command to create an Instagram-style coloured light leak. Connect the Source option to the previous box to join up the effects. Now choose a colour for your Profile Gradient in the Color Picker. Link this to Color 2 in the Profile Gradient, so that the gradient will run from the dominant colour of the source image to your chosen colour.

TOP FIVE... USER-GENERATED FILTER FORGE FILTERS

BLUEPRINT DRAWING www.filterforge.com/filters/8850.html

This filter by Corvus Croax replicates the look of a blueprint drawing, making it ideal for adding a retro product-design look to photos of buildings, vehicles and objects. It offers six presets for complete control.

DABBER V0.7 www.filterforge.com/filters/8420.html

This filter by Skybase re-creates the look of a splashily coloured ink drawing. It has 12 presets, all of which focus on a different colour and have different levels and amounts of ink splashes.

FAKE COMICS www.filterforge.com/filters/10325.html

Created by inujima, this creative filter emulates the look of old-fashioned manga comics. It splits the image into panels and adds glyphs that look like text boxes and speech bubbles. Fifteen presets offer a complete range of panel styles.

PATTERNED DITHERING www.filterforge.com/filters/10635.html

Another vintage-styled filter from inujima, this one reproduces the halftone patterns and limited colour tints of old magazines or Pop Art. 20 presets offer a wide variety of colour controls for a faded, rough-paper look.

SHARK TANK! www.filterforge.com/filters/2853.html

This filter from Crapadilla makes your photos look as if they're being viewed through thick, wet, tinted glass. The default blue theme is pretty evocative, but a total of nine presets offer a range of other colour options as well.

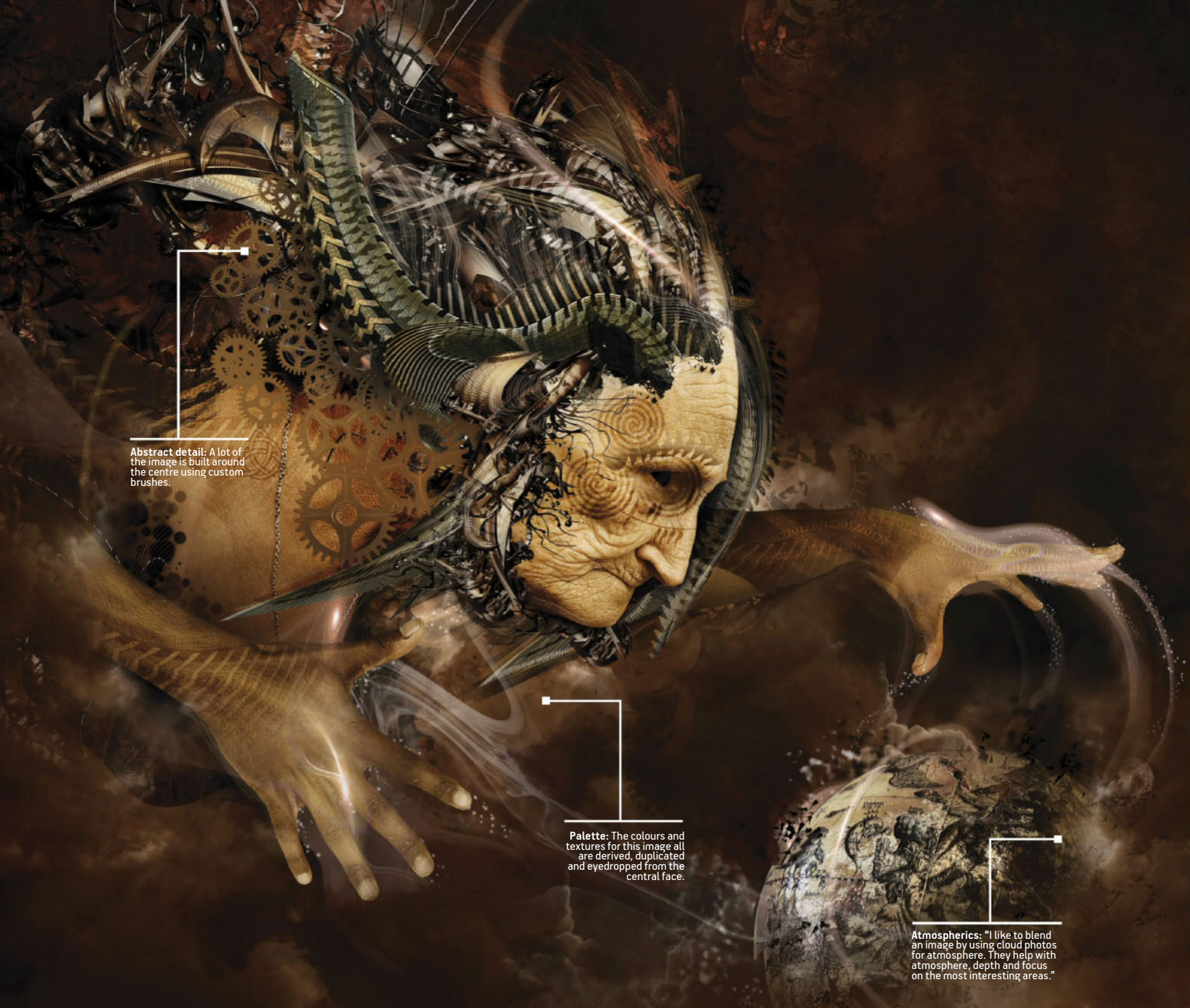


03 FINISH THE FILTER

Join the Result box to the penultimate command in the command tree using the Source option, to see how the final filter will look on a preview image. Use the Filter Options box to add information about your filter – especially if you're going to be showcasing it online – and save it with a simple, descriptive name. You're all done – now you can try it out by opening a new image in Filter Forge and seeing how it looks!



Flight: *Flight* is an experiment using custom brushes, 3D models, abstract shapes and Photoshop filters. The idea was to create something that resembles an ink drawing or *2000 AD* comic book style. The image was created in greyscale for balance before giving it an orange wash.



Abstract detail: A lot of the image is built around the centre using custom brushes.

Palette: The colours and textures for this image all are derived, duplicated and eyedropped from the central face.

Atmospherics: "I like to blend an image by using cloud photos for atmosphere. They help with atmosphere, depth and focus on the most interesting areas."



Proprius Fear: Proprius was created to illustrate a feeling of anxiety in everyday life. Light effects, custom brushes and abstract 3D shapes were combined with a faceless model to convey that feeling.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS MOST IMPORTANT WHEN CREATING AN IMAGE?

Detail, balance, tone and composition. It is very easy to destroy a piece by overusing filters or effects as well as trying to over-detail something. Sometimes I stop a piece and put it aside so it can be looked at with fresh eyes at a later date. If it's personal work that has no deadline it's sometimes fun to come back to it. Often a new photo or abstract sketch can help finish a piece I started six months ago.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT PHOTOSHOP?

The versatility. I can combine so many mediums: painting, photography, sculpture, texture and light. There is no end to it. I have refined my use of filters and now I use three or four. I'm also a big fan of High Pass and Unsharp Mask. I love using the Median filter if I need to, to soften a pixilated 3D image and make it look more painterly. My work always consists of using black and white overlays or Soft Light blending modes on an original colour layer to get more depth and shadow.

WHO WOULD YOU SAY IS YOUR INSPIRATION?

When I was in college I really respected artists like Robert Mapplethorpe and Egon Schiele. I love work by Turner and the old masters. I really like the photographic work of Fredrik Ödman, the illustrations by Philip Straub, Eamon O'Donoghue and Phil McDarby. Overall my favourite artist would be Android Jones. His ideas, techniques and personal beliefs are very exciting.

CAN YOU GIVE ANY ADVICE TO ARTISTS JUST STARTING OUT?

There is no such thing as no or negative criticism. If you get turned down for work because it's not good enough, find out how to make it better. In terms of techniques, learn to play with brushes, layers and opacities, and learning to use Quick Masks and layer masks is extremely beneficial.

DESIGN TIPS

- Try duplicating your image and setting the top layer to Grayscale and Soft Light blending mode. Instead of using Dodge and Burn, paint lighting using a layer set to Overlay with a soft brush set to 60% Opacity in black and white.
- To add texture, I always try to find something interesting and out of the box to create the shape or texture I want. It could be a scribble, photo or even ink on wet paper.
- Looking at silhouettes is a great way to let your subconscious exercise your imagination – almost like looking at a Rorschach test.



St Carbon Gaard: The dragon was created using custom shapes, brushes, abstract 3D and photos of various birds.



Conclave Mech: "This sci-fi piece was created for a local games convention as a prize piece. It depicts my local city being destroyed by a Mad Cat from MechWarrior."



Marga: "This image was created by using custom brushes and some 3D. I then created abstract shapes, which I duplicated to get the desired effect."



RESOURCE PROJECT

WOODBLOCK PRINTING

LEARN HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN WOODBLOCKS AND
CONVERT THE PRINTS INTO DIGITAL RESOURCES

Woodblock printing is one of the most ancient forms of printing. The concept of using a block of wood to press ink onto parchment or fabric is so elegantly simple that the techniques are still used today. The idea is that the negative space is carved away from the surface of the woodblock, so that the ink is only carried by the original raised surface. The

print reveals the character of the wood used for the carving, as often the grain and cut marks are still visible. This gives a very handcrafted personality to the prints. Even though the same block can be used repeatedly, every print will be slightly different due to the fluid nature of the ink. These natural variables and imperfections are part of what makes the prints so visually interesting and gives the art its inherent beauty.

In the digital realm, it is very difficult to reproduce the type of handcrafted look produced by woodblocks. Over the next few pages, we will show you how to make your own woodblock, print with it and convert the prints into Photoshop brushes, to add authentic handcrafted flavour to your art. Remember that you will need to carve the matrix for your print backwards to ensure it prints the right way!

GETTING THE PROJECT READY

THE PREP WORK IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE ACTUAL PRODUCT



01 | GATHER YOUR MATERIALS

To start you will need a wood carving set, some black ink, a sponge brush, poster board and wood for carving. For your first carving project, we recommend using a soft wood like balsa until your technique and skill in wood handling matures.



02 | DRAFT DIGITAL ARTWORK

Design the print digitally in a size matching the wood block. Remember to just use black and white – no gradients or feathering! Also be sure to include a border to assist with aligning the wood piece. When finished, print the artwork onto paper.



03 | PREPARE THE SURFACE

The next step is to use a piece of fine grain sandpaper to sand the surface of the wooden block until smooth. This serves the dual purpose of providing a consistent printing surface and also helps to reduce splinters!

ANCIENT TECHNIQUES, MODERN MEANS

DESPITE OUR TECHNOLOGY, IT STILL ALL COMES DOWN TO HOW TO APPLY INK TO A PIECE OF PAPER



04 | TRANSFER THE ARTWORK
Now place the printed artwork face down on the wooden block. Use a smooth but hard cylindrical object, like the cap of a marker, to firmly rub the back of the paper, transferring the ink onto the wooden surface.



05 | TIME TO TRACE
Use a fine point ink pen or marker to trace out the contour lines of the ink transfer. This will make it easier to carve along the artwork lines. Consider inking in visual cues as to what surface area needs to be removed.



06 | WOOD CARVING
Carefully use the blades of the wood carving set to extract the wood from the negative areas of the artwork. The carving does not need to be very deep; as long as it is deep enough to avoid contact with the paper.



07 | INK THE WOOD
Use the sponge brush to apply ink generously to the relief surface. Soft wood, like the balsa, will absorb ink like a sponge. Work quickly to cover the positive areas with ink, but be cautious not to drop it into the negative carved areas.



08 | STAMP AWAY
Place the wood, ink side down, onto the poster board. You will need considerable amounts of force to print the wood cut image onto the paper. If you do not have a book press handy, consider using weights or books.



09 | STOP THE PRESSES!
After 20 minutes to an hour, remove the weight from the block and gently separate the block from the paper. If not everything transferred properly, you can repeat the process. It doesn't need to be perfect – minor corrections can be made digitally.

DIGITAL ENHANCEMENT

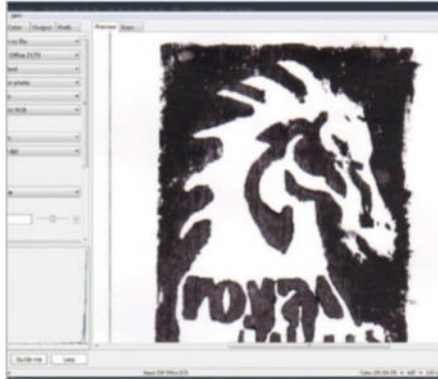
LEVERAGING THE DIGITAL ADVANTAGE TO CREATE A MORE INTERESTING EFFECT

Perfecting the craft of woodcut printing can take years, but you can still produce almost flawless designs by using your digital advantage. Scan in every print and then digitally combine them to use the best parts of each one! Another helpful trick is to scan in the surface of the raw wood block. This can then be used to give more wood grain texture to prints that look too heavy on ink. Desaturate the block scan and use Levels to generate extreme contrast. Layer the scan over the print image and set the blending mode to Linear Dodge. Then reduce the opacity to taste.



BRINGING THE RESOURCE HOME

HOW TO TRANSFORM THE INK DESIGN INTO PIXELS USING PHOTOSHOP



10 DIGITISE!

A flatbed scanner is the preferred method of digitising printed effects. Just be sure that the ink is completely dry before scanning the paper! Use a scanning resolution of a minimum of 600 dpi for the best quality. Then open the image in Photoshop.



11 CLEAN UP

While much of the random grunge aspect of the print should be retained, it is likely that there will be some areas that the ink strayed into where it shouldn't, or did not transfer in areas it should. Use some brushwork to clean up these anomalies.



12 REPAIR WORK

Some areas require more than a few brush strokes to repair. This may be a result of carving mistakes or ink splashes. In either case, the Clone Stamp tool is effective for corrections. The Smudge tool is also great for getting cut lines into shape.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

WHICH WAY IS IN OR OUT, UP OR DOWN? HOW TO KEEP IT STRAIGHT

You may have the idea that the design you print should be backwards because it will then be printed onto the paper. However, remember that you are doing a double transfer, once onto the wood, then again onto the paper, so that negates the need to flip the artwork before printing.

Decide if you want to create the print image as a positive or negative. This can be determined by many factors, like wanting to reduce the amount of carved wood, or to make some of the finer details easier to handle. Deciding later to invert the scanned image in Photoshop doesn't work as well as you might think; you completely lose the wood grain and any ink texture with this approach.



CREATING THE RESOURCE

REFINING AND USING THE RESOURCE IN YOUR OWN PROJECTS




13 | ENHANCED CONTRAST
Use a Levels adjustment layer to create greater contrast within the print. Keep in mind that this will eventually define a brush. The darker the pixels are here, the more opaque that area will be with the brush.



14 | DEFINE BRUSH
Flatten the image and desaturate it to remove any stray colour definitions. Look over the print once more, touching up any stray ink spots as needed. Then go to Edit>Define Brush Preset to save this as a digital resource.



15 | STAMP AWAY
When using the brush in your own artwork, be aware that it's really more of a stamp than a brush. It is intended to be used with a single click, not a stroke. This allows all the control of a regular brush along with the grunge qualities of a woodcut print.



FileSilo

ONE LARGE ASSET

USE A SET OF WOODCUT ALPHABET BRUSHES TO ADD SOME HAND-CARVED CHARACTER TO YOUR FONT LIST!

We've meticulously carved out each letter of the alphabet, used the woodcut printing technique and converted them into brushes. All free for you to add hand-carved character to your designs!

NOT
QRS
TUV

DEFZ
GHIJ
KLM

ABC

Learn in style



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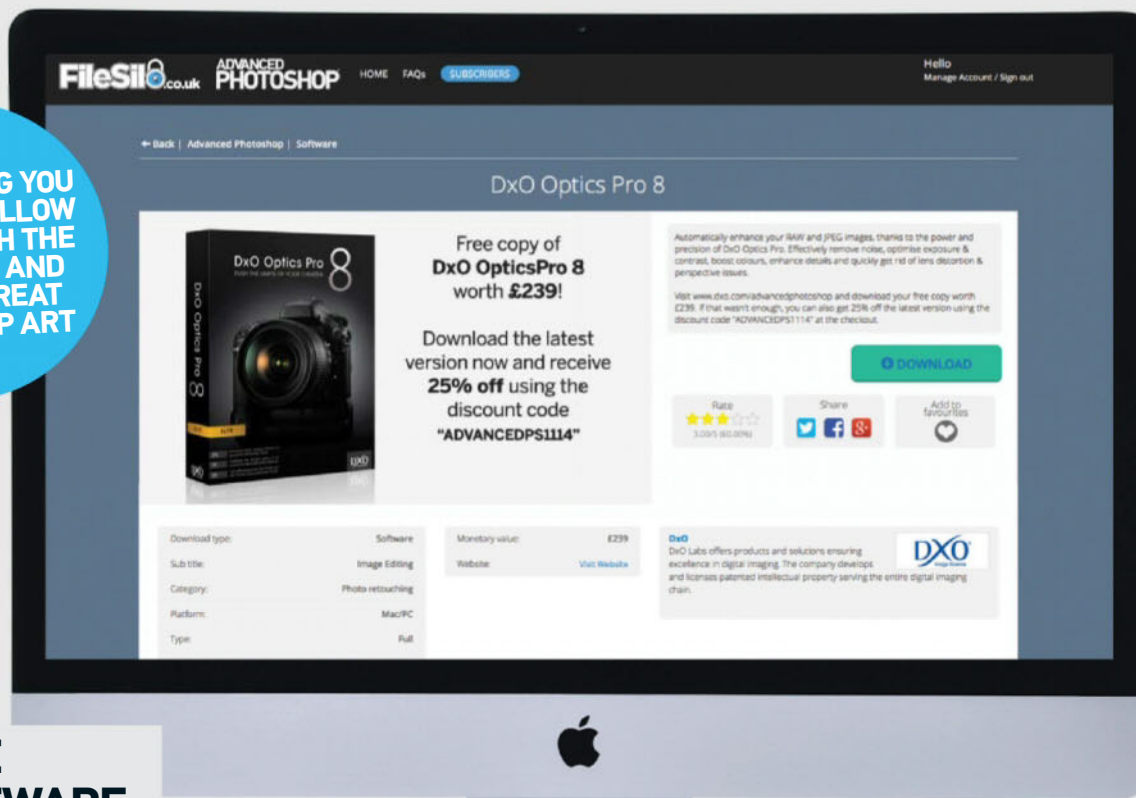


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- Steampunk stock pack
- Halftone and paint textures
- All tutorial files for this issue

FileSilo

www.filesilo.co.uk/advancedphotoshop-129

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This is the new FileSilo site that replaces your disc. You'll find it by visiting the link on the following page.

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HOW TO USE FileSilo

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ACCESSING YOUR NEW DIGITAL REPOSITORY

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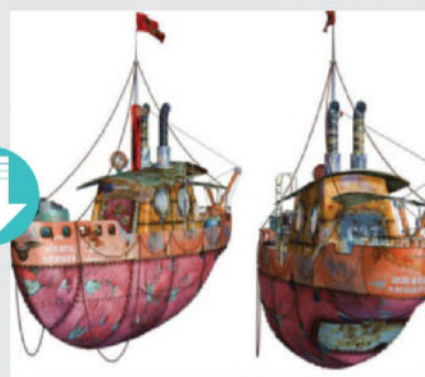
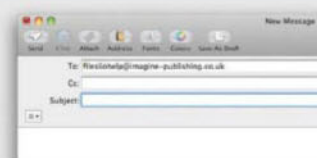


question about the magazine. You can access plenty of content for free with the issue.

02 If you're a print subscriber, you can easily unlock all the content by entering your unique Web ID. Your Web ID is the eight-digit alphanumeric code printed above your address details on the mailing labels of your subscription copies. It can also be found on your renewal letters..

03 You can access FileSilo on any desktop, tablet or smartphone device using any popular browser (such as Safari, Firefox or Google Chrome). However, we recommend that you use a desktop to download content, as you may not be able to download files to your phone or tablet.

04 If you have any problems with accessing content on FileSilo, or with the registration process, take a look at the FAQs online or email filesilohelp@imagine-publishing.co.uk.



NEED HELP WITH THE TUTORIALS?

Having trouble with any of the techniques in this issue's tutorials? Don't know how to make the best use of your free resources? Want to have your work critiqued by those in the know? Then why not visit the **Advanced Photoshop** Facebook page for all your questions, concerns and qualms. There is a friendly community of fellow Photoshop users to help you out, as well as regular posts and updates from the magazine team. Like us today and start chatting!



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